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JAMES BOSWELL

WORKS ON BOSWELL BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

BOSWELL AND CROKER'S BOSWELL.

BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON,
WITH THE
"TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES."
A REPRINT OF THE FIRST EDITION, WITH NOTES.

The Same. *Second Edition.*
WITH A BIBLIOGRAPHY BY H. TEDDER, ESQ.

EDITING À LA MODÈ:
AN EXAMINATION OF DR. G. BIRKBECK HILL'S EDITION OF BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON.

A RE-EXAMINATION of the Same.

POSTSCRIPT.

JAMES BOSWELL.

From a sketch by Langton.

LIFE OF

AMES BOSWELL

(OF AUCHINLECK)

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF

HIS SAYINGS, DOINGS, AND WRITINGS

BY

PERCY FITZGERALD, M.A., F.S.A.

AUTHOR OF

"THE LIFE OF GARRICK," "FATAL ZERO," ETC.

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PREFACE.

When we consider the increasing interest now taken in the genial Laird of Auchinleck and his works, it seems surprising that no full official account has yet been furnished of his life and adventures. Much as we know of him and his erratic career, there is no reader of his books but would long to know more. Many years ago, indeed, the editor of the "Temple Letters" prefixed a short account to his collection; and later, Dr. Rogers, when editing his "Boswelliana," added a somewhat fuller sketch, which contained many new and curious particulars. Later, again, Mr. Leslie Stephen prepared for the "Dictionary of National Biography" a very full and excellent epitome of all the incidents in Boswell's career, supplemented, as might be expected, by much sound, shrewd criticism. We have, also, the well-known essays of Lord Macaulay, and of Mr. Carlyle, with a short notice in Mr. Leslie Stephen's "Johnson." There are, also, Mr. Elwin's interesting article on Boswell in the *Quarterly Review;* a few papers by friends of Boswell, shortly after his death, in the *Gentleman's Magazine;* and the characteristic account of himself, written by Boswell in 1791 for the *European Magazine.* This was not much; and we should naturally wish to know a little more of so interesting a person,

who, during a century, has contributed so largely to the entertainment and exhilaration of generations of readers.

During many years I have been collecting materials for these volumes, and venture to hope that the reader will be both surprised and gratified by the amount of new and interesting details that are here presented to him. I have followed Boswell's somewhat eccentric course almost year by year, without attempting to gloss over his failings, adopting his own too candid admission that he "lived laxly in the world." The question of his rather perplexing character—an interesting and almost fascinating subject—will be here found discussed at length; and, in the chapter entitled "Boswell self-revealed," I have opened up a rather piquant subject of inquiry for Boswellians. Having been myself an editor of the "Life of Johnson," I have felt emboldened to discuss at length the true principles of editing "Boswell," from which it seems that modern editors, including perhaps myself, have wandered astray. I have also devoted a good deal of consideration to Boswell's other writings, which, in their way, are interesting.

On May 16, 1791—a Monday morning—the "Life of Johnson" was issued to an expectant public. By a happy coincidence I find myself, on the 16th of May, 1891—just one hundred years later,—writing these words of introduction to a life of the author of this immortal book.

I have to thank Mr. Murray for kindly allowing me to use one of the illustrations to his edition of the "Life."

ATHENÆUM CLUB,
May 16, 1891.

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JAMES BOSWELL.

From a sketch by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

LIFE OF JAMES BOSWELL.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOSWELLS—LORD AUCHINLECK.

DEAN BOYD, in his reminiscences, speaks with natural pride of the high lineage and "good blood" of Scottish families, adding that he had almost invariably found that persons of other nations were eager to claim connection with a Caledonian stock. The Boswells can boast of a very distinguished pedigree in the country of good pedigrees; and their most famous son, James, in his own characteristic style, has enumerated the glories of his race.

"Thomas Boswell," he tells us, "was the first Laird of Auchinleck (pronounced Affleck), Ayrshire, after the estate had fallen to the then Crown by the forfeiture of the very ancient family of that ilk. I am told the *Afflecks* of England are the heirs of the forfeited family. I am proud of the connection; but should be unwilling to resign to them the estate of which they have now no need. Thomas Boswell was a descendant of the family of Balmuto, in Fife, whose estate was purchased in this century by a younger son of my family. Thomas Boswell was married to a daughter of the Campbells, of Loudon, and a granddaughter of the forfeited Affleck. He was killed with his king on

the *fatal field* of Flodden in 1513, fighting against the English, though he was himself of old Yorkshire extraction, being descended of the respectable family of Bosville or Boswell—for both they and we have spelt it both ways at different times—of Gunthwait, in the West Riding. After a separation of ages, I join our branch in cordial friendship with the stock, our Chief, the late Godfrey Bosville, Esq., as honest a man, as perfect an example of the 'noblest work of God,' as ever lived."

The family could boast a long line of knights and warriors, united by marriage with the Wemyses, Orkneys, Campbells, Carnwaths, and other noble houses. At the beginning of last century the legal "strain" first began to show itself, when the family adopted the Bar as a profession. David's great-grandson, James, in the odd pamphlet which he addressed to "the people of Scotland," thus describes David :—

"My much-respected great-grandfather, that 'worthy gentleman,' David Boswell, of Auchinleck, a true heart of oak, with a vigorous mind and a robust body, secured one male successor. His uncle, though he had four daughters, the eldest of whom was married to Lord Cathcart (who would have been glad to have had an *old rock*), was good enough to give him the estate. The Laird used to say that 'he never saw a man in his life, but he did not think himself his master.' *I, pejoravis*, cannot say so much; but this I will say, that 'I call no man master' without reason. When I have fixed my opinion upon an important question, I maintain it as a point of conscience, as a point of honour; and the *Sovereign* himself would find me *tenacem propositi*, as I humbly but firmly was upon the subject of the American War. I am a Tory, but not a slave."

David Boswell had two sons, James and Robert; the

latter, a successful "Writer to the Signet," brought up his son Claude to the Bar, who became a judge, with the title of Lord Balmuto. James, David's other son, also adopted the Bar as a profession, in which he distinguished himself as an advocate, marrying Lady Elizabeth Bruce, daughter of the Earl of Kincardine. He had two sons, Alexander and John, and a daughter, Veronica. John adopted the medical profession; but the eldest, Alexander, followed the Bar, and became a judge under the title of Lord Auchinleck. Veronica married Mr. Montgomerie, of Lainshaw; her daughter was the wife of James Boswell, Dr. Johnson's friend and biographer. The Boswells, therefore, might latterly be considered a "high" *legal* family, and it was natural that Lord Auchinleck should look forward to his son's distinguishing himself in the same line. His disappointment and irritation at the failure of his hopes was pardonable enough, and led to the disputes, and strained relations, which continued between him and his erratic son during their lives. His disgust and grotesque indignation at his son's attachment to Johnson was, therefore, warranted by the spectacle of good opportunities wasted, and the fair prospects of a prosperous establishment in life utterly thrown away.

Lord Auchinleck's father, James Boswell, was described as a heavy plodding man, and a good lawyer of plain sense without imagination. He was so slow and dull that he used to be put up to speak when business had to be protracted. "Lord Kames, in conversation with James Boswell, gave him the following anecdote: 'Your grandfather, Mr. James Boswell, was one of the best lawyers of his time. I had no other acquaintance with him than people come to have from daily seeing each others' faces and walking in the same room.'"

In the "Tour" we find a characteristic passage relating to this generation. "The saint's name of Veronica was introduced into our family through my great-grandmother, Veronica, Countess of Kincardine, a Dutch lady of the noble house of Sommelsdyck, of which there is a full account in Bayle's 'Dictionary.' The family had once a princely right in Surinam. The governor of the settlement was appointed by the states-general, the towns of Amsterdam and Sommelsdyck. The states-general have acquired Sommelsdyck's right, but the family has still great dignity and opulence, and by intermarriages is connected with many other noble families. The present Sommelsdyck has an important charge in the republic, and is as worthy a man as lives. My great-grandfather, the husband of Countess Veronica, was Alexander, Earl of Kincardine, that eminent Royalist, whose character is given by Burnet in his 'History of his own Times.' From him the blood of Bruce flows in my veins. Of such ancestry who would not be proud? And as 'Nihil est, nisi hoc sciat alter' is peculiarly true of genealogy, who would not be glad to seize a fair opportunity to let it be known?" Mr. Boswell was fond, indeed, of calling himself "Baron of Auchinleck," and late in life seemed to have cherished a dream of actually obtaining some honour of the kind.

The fact of the mother being a Dutch lady naturally accounts for the Dutch education given to her son and grandson. The future Lord Auchinleck was accordingly despatched to Utrecht, and found a number of his relatives established there. Thence he went to Paris, where he figured as a beau. Many years later, when his son James was on a visit to Lord Kames, Mr. Drummond, of Blair, used to describe the father's red heels and red stockings, and the lad was so diverted "that he

could hardly sit on his chair for laughing." He was probably thinking of the rather grim contrast with such finery that his father then presented. At the Bar he was liked for his courtesy and fairness, and into his pleadings he introduced what he and his friends held to be "a vein of wit and irony;" but which to our generation seems coarseness and arrogance. He proved to be a painstaking and sagacious judge, and "even those who found fault with his vulgarisms admitted his industry." On circuit he was hospitable and courteous, and his habit was to make acquaintance with every one of any consideration in the district through which he passed. It was his rule to spend every shilling of his allowance, telling his guests that the circuit table was the king's, not his. "Gentlemen," he would say, "claret is my liquor; if any one chooses port or punch, let him call for it." In his shrewd way, he said he considered that the practice of asking gentlemen to dinner in turn was "like entertaining beggars at a burial, who get their alms by rotation." He took no pains to improve his rude Scotch dialect, which he rather fostered. He was a sturdy loyalist and Presbyterian, and highly popular among his tenants. He was very proud of his advancement as sheriff, for he happened to be the first that was appointed on the abolition of hereditary jurisdictions. Often in his judgments he would make allusion to this important fact, "*I, gentlemen, am the first king's sheriff.*" These, however, were pardonable eccentricities.

His first promotion was in 1748, when he was made Sheriff Deputy of Wigton. He was fortunate in the patronage of the well-known Duke of Newcastle, to whom he owed his advancement to the Bench in 1754. In Lord Hailes' journal we find, "1754, Feb. 14. My

friend Mr. Alex. Boswell admitted a Lord of Session. He told me it was by the interest of the Duke of Newcastle. For once at least his Grace judged right."

In little more than a year, on the death of Drumore, a judge of the Higher Court of Justiciary, we find him applying to his patron for advancement.

Lord Auchinleck to the Duke of Newcastle.

"My Lord,—Under the highest sense of your Grace's favor, to which I have the honour to say I owe my being one of the Judges of the Court of Session, I have ventured not without difficulty to make this address. By the death of Lord Drumore there is now a vacancy in the Court of Justiciary, which falls to be supplied by one of our Bench. May I presume once more to have recourse to your Grace's disinterested patronage? It is not in my power to make returns further than by wishes that your influence may daily become more diffused, and contributing my poor mite thereto as often as there is opportunity, which indeed is no more but wishing well to the publick, and acting on that plan which I hope shall ever be my endeavour. I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, my Lord Duke, your Grace's most obedient and most humble servant, Alex. Boswell.

"Edinburgh, June 19, 1755."*

Other candidates applied almost by the same post, of whom Mr. Dundas wrote, that "they were very good men, both, and attached to your Grace." But Lord Auchinleck did not succeed. In 1755 he was more fortunate, and was appointed a Lord of Justiciary. Six

* Brit. Mus., Newcastle papers, Ad. MS., 32,856.

years later this attachment to his Grace fell under suspicion, and the judge vindicated himself in what his son would have called "a characteristical letter" of great length.

Lord Auchinleck to the Duke of Newcastle.

"Edinburgh, March 20, 1760.

"My dear Lord,—I had yesterday the honour to receive your Lordship's kind and obliging letter, the first part of which, that I might not mix dissimilar things, I have answered by a letter which goes under this same cover. What I am now to write upon concerns the last part of your letter. Your Lordship signifies to me that I am somehow censured about the Militia scheme, and desires to know what the E. of Holdernesse wrote to me upon that subject. That you may have an opportunity to vindicate your friend from dark attacks, I could have wished your Lordship had had time to have explained the matter further, as, at present, I cannot divine for what I am censured.

"That being the case, in order to enable you to do me justice, I am necessarily drawn in to write at greater length than had I known the particulars for which I am blamed. I am no politician, but know so much of government and of history, ancient and modern, as to think Britain the happiest state that exists or has been, —owing to a happy concurrence of circumstances, its situation, its Constitution, and the truly patriotic disposition of his Majesty, a disposition which was remarkable too in his illustrious father, and which there is reason to hope will continue with his descendants.

"I must at the same time say that, as I have often admired the wisdom of Providence in providing the industrious and laborious Republick of Bees who treasure

up a store of what most readily attracts invaders, with weapons proper for their defence, which every individual knows how to wield, and to which they owe their preservation, it still occurred to me as a very strange thing that a Republick of raised men should not employ that judgment and invention God has given them to put themselves in condition to defend their liberties, their priviledges, all that is valuable to them, from the Attacks of Enemies.

"This abstract and philosophical reflection is strongly enforced from the fatal consequence of the neglect of it, recorded to us by the historians of all ages, who tell us of many States, abounding in influence, that fell a prey to a handful of invaders, experienced in the art of war. And indeed to evince it, give me leave to call to your Lordship's remembrance the dismal apprehension you and I had that night of the Battle of Falkirk, when we saw a handful of Highlanders, as it were, shakeing the throne, and the many hundred thousands of well-affected subjects who abhorred them, from disuse of arms, lying by, trembling under the apprehension that all would be lost by the cowardice or treachery of the few regular troops, on whom all depended. I will say more, these were not vain fears, though Providence happily disappointed them. The Duke of Cumberland, his Royal Highness's presence inspired the officers and soldiers with courage, and to him, under God, we owe our happy deliverance. My dear Lord, I have great honour for the gentlemen of the army, and I shall always be of opinion that it is under penalty necessary to have a very considerable standing army kept up at all times. But I must be forgiven for being also of opinion that it is also proper and necessary that the people, whose all is at stake, should be in a condition to

act as a *corps de reserve*, in case any disaster befalling the regular troops, that so all may not be over, in a manner, at once. To come a little nearer to the point still, I must say the state of the kingdom, last year, reviv'd the above thoughts afresh in my mind. An invasion was threatened and intended by our most inveterate enemies. Had they got over, your Lordship knows the numbers of effective troops that could have been brought against them. These troops had been ill conducted. I mean reflections against no one—for I don't know who was to lead, or if that was feared. But let us suppose they had behaved as the troops at Falkirk did. What would have been the consequence? The millions of people in Britain could have done nothing but lament. Again, I suppose there had been but a small landing in Scotland. Your Lordship knows what a handful of troops there were to resist, and these all incamped, as was reasonable, near this place. In the situation I thought it my duty to concur in an humble address to his Majesty from the County of Air, where, God be thanked! there is neither disaffection nor dissatisfaction, praying that he might be graciously pleased to order us to be put in a posture of defence. And such was the zealous spirit of the people that, without being anyhow burdensome to the State, further than the furnishing of arms, which we could not have been supplied with any other way, I make not the least doubt we should have had 1500 or 2000 men trained in a very short time, which would have us under very little dread of M. de Thurot. This address I had the honour, as Præses to the meeting, to transmit to the Earl of Holdernesse, with a letter containing more fully our views. And to this letter his Lordship was pleased to honour me with a return." A sensible, though

pedantic letter, with many quaint and "pawky" strokes, significant of the judge's nature.

From Sir Walter Scott, Mr. Croker obtained some characteristic notes relating to the old laird. "Old Lord Auchinleck," he says, "was an able lawyer, a good scholar, after the manner of Scotland, and highly valued his own advantages as a man of good estate and ancient family; and, moreover, he was a strict Presbyterian and Whig of the old Scottish cast. This did not prevent his being a terribly proud aristocrat; and great was the contempt he entertained and expressed for his son James, for the nature of his friendships and the character of the personages of whom he was *engoué* one after another. 'There's nae hope for Jamie, mon,' he said to a friend. 'Jamie is gaen clean gyte. What do you think, mon? He's done wi' Paoli—he's off wi' the land-louping scoundrel of a Corsican; and whose tail do you think he has pinned himself to now, mon?' Here the old judge summoned up a sneer of most sovereign contempt. 'A *dominie*, mon—an auld dominie; he keeped a schule, and cau'd it an acaadamy.' These oddities the old lord carried to such an unusual length, that once, when a countryman came in to state some justice business, and, being required to make his oath, declined to do so before his lordship, because he was not a *covenanted* magistrate,—'Is that a' your objection, mon?' said the judge; 'come your ways in here, and we'll baith of us tak' the solemn league and covenant together.' The oath was accordingly agreed and sworn to by both."

"He had," says his son, "originally a very strong mind and cheerful temper. He assured me, he never had felt one moment of what is called low spirits, or uneasiness, without a real cause. He had a great many

good stories, which he told uncommonly well, and he was remarkable for 'humour, *incolumi gravitate*,' as Lord Monboddo used to characterize it. His age, his office, and his character had long given him an acknowledged claim to great attention, in whatever company he was; and he could ill brook any diminution of it. He was as sanguine a Whig and Presbyterian, as Dr. Johnson was a Tory and Church of England man." *

* His son's praise as to his being remarkable for humour, and able to tell a good story, is hardly warranted by the specimens that have been preserved; for the stories are of the dull class which old judges are wont to relate upon circuit, the whole interest of which lies in the narrator's having *known* the subject of the narrative, or having taken part in the incident. Here are some of the good stories so carefully registered by his son:

"Sir William Gordon would needs make a library because my Lord Sunderland made one, but all he wanted was just dear books. He came in one day to Vanderaa's shop, in Leyden, and asked if he had got any dear new books. Vanderaa showed him the 'Thesaurus Italiæ et Siciliæ' in —— volumes. Sir William turned to Dr. Cooper and said, 'Pray, Doctor, have I got that book?' 'No, Sir William, nor do I think you have occasion for it.' 'Mr. Cooper, I cannot be without that book.' 'Upon my word, Sir William, I think you might very well be without it.' 'There, Mr. Cooper, you and I differ. Mr. Vanderaa, let that book be packed up and sent to me, to Scotland.'"

Another story was no doubt often received with obsequious merriment at the circuit dinners.

"Sir William Gordon wanted a servant who could write well. 'My father,' said he, 'knew of a very clever fellow, but the most drunken, good-for-nothing dog that ever lived.' 'Oh,' said Sir William, 'no matter for that, let him be sent for.' So when he came, Sir William asked him a great many questions, to which Brodie answered most distinctly. At last he asked him, 'Can you write Latin, sir?' 'Can your honour read it?' said he. Sir William was quite fond of him, and had him drest out to all advantage. One day, at his own table, he was telling a story. 'Not so, sir,' said Brodie, who was standing at his back. 'You dog,' said he, 'how do you know?' 'Because I have heard your honour tell it before.' He lived with Sir William more than seven years."

His son, when out riding with him, often complained of fatigue, and added, that "nothing so fatigued as the hinging upon a horse." His father replied, "What does it matter how a man hinge if he is not hinging upon a gallows?"

The interest of such stories, as is often the case with stories

His judgments had a quaint eccentric turn with humorous touches. The Scottish judges in the last century were, in private as well as on the bench, a strange body, and few more eccentric beings could be imagined than Monboddo, Covington, Kames, and Auchinleck.*

Yet there was something that interested in this inflexible old Scot, who was as proud of being a laird as he was of being a judge. He took great delight in his old Ayrshire castle, which, with its fine scenery and ruins, was deservedly admired; and as his immediate progenitors, his father, grandfather, with others of the race, had all contributed to the credit of the house, he might have looked forward to his son distinguishing himself in the same way.

Johnson gives a pleasing picture of the place and of its owner. "Lord Auchinleck," he writes, "who is one of the judges of Scotland, and therefore not wholly at leisure for domestic business or pleasure, has yet found time to make improvements in his patrimony. He has built a house of hard stone, very stately and durable, and has advanced the value of his lands with great tenderness to his tenants. I was, however, less delighted

of old judges, is entirely local and professional. Mr. Ramsay, of Ochiltyre, gives this specimen of the judge's humour. The tailors of Perth took an action against the mantua-makers as infringing on their rights, they claiming to have the privilege from William the Lion himself. "Auchinleck" wrote a much-admired paper as Counsel for the milliners. He supposed William the Lion's master tailor conjured up to give his opinions of a modern lady's dress. A conceit which the relater declared was not unworthy of Swift.

* Their peculiarities are described in that odd composition, "The Court of Session Garland" (given in Robert Chambers' "Traditions of Edinburgh"), some verses of which are by James Boswell. One judge was noted for using the coarse word "b——h" on every occasion, and when taking leave of his brethren, said, "Farewell, ye b——hes."

with the elegance of the modern mansion than with the solemn dignity of the old castle. I clambered with Mr. Boswell among the ruins, which afford striking images of ancient life. At no great distance from the house runs a pleasing brook, by a red rock, out of which has been hewn a very agreeable and commodious summer-house, at less expense, Lord Auchinleck told me, than would have been required to build a room of the same dimensions."

He had built himself a good modern house, in the Grecian manner, an early work of one of the brothers Adam. There is, besides, an older house, now a ruin, situated near the gardens, and on a bank above the river. "The old castle is close by, and stands upon a rock, at the confluence of the river and the burn. The view from the gardens is very fine, looking down the river in a vista between rocks, and well-wooded. On the avenue leading towards Ayr there is a lofty bridge overlooking the burn. The modern house occupies a commanding position, and, from the windows behind, the sea may be seen. The road to the church, which Dr. Johnson called the *via sacra*, is nearly straight for upwards of two miles. Now the Glasgow Railway runs through the estates, and factories have been erected. The family burying-place is behind the old church, and there lie the remains of James Boswell." *

* This pleasing description of Auchinleck as it now appears, has been furnished to me by a resident well acquainted with the place.

CHAPTER II.

JAMES BOSWELL'S CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION.

1740–1760.

JAMES BOSWELL, to whom the world owes so large a debt for entertainment of a very original and perennial kind, was born on October 29, 1740. His mother was Miss Euphemia Erskine, who was connected with the noble house of Mar. Brought up at Auchinleck, the family seat, where his father had built a mansion close to the old castle, James was placed under the tutor-, or *domine*-ship, of Mr. John Dunn, a worthy clergyman of poetical tastes, who had been appointed by the laird to the ministry of Auchinleck. This pedagogue had thus a fair claim on his forbearance, or, at least, discretion; but, carried away by the spirit of his work, and a craze for reporting every detail, he could not bring himself to spare even his master. When the "Tour" appeared, the worthy Mr. Dunn must have read with grief and astonishment a most unflattering sketch of himself in his pupil's book. After Dr. Johnson and his guide had arrived at Auchinleck, the minister courteously invited both to dine at his manse. "Mr. Dunn," says Boswell, "though a man of sincere good principles as a Presbyterian divine, discovered a narrowness of information concerning the dignitaries of the Church of England. He talked before

Dr. Johnson of fat bishops and drowsy deans; and, in short, seemed to believe the illiberal and profane scoffings of professed satirists or vulgar railers. Dr. Johnson was so highly offended, that he said to him, 'Sir, you know no more of our Church than a Hottentot.' I was sorry that he brought this upon himself." No doubt the clergyman made remonstrance; and Boswell felt constrained to alter the passage, turning it into "one of them"—that is, one of a number of clergymen whom Johnson met.

Under this pedagogue he received the early rudiments of his education, being strictly supervised by the stern old judge. We have one characteristic trait, and but one only, of the child Boswell, which his great friend was fond of telling, "from my relation to him." "Boswell, in the year 1745, was a fine boy, wore a white cockade, and prayed for King James, till one of his uncles (General Cochran) gave him a shilling, on condition that he would pray for King George, which he accordingly did. 'So you see,' says Boswell, 'that Whigs of all ages are made in the same way.'" To the end he was always a Jacobite.

Released from Mr. Dunn's care, the young James was despatched to a private school at Edinburgh, kept by Mr. James Mundell, and later to the High School, where he was placed under Mr. John Gilchrist, a renowned classical scholar. When he had finished his course in this academy, he was put to study law, and regularly attended lectures. Instead, however, of diligently pursuing his studies, he fell into idleness and dissipation, which continued during his youth, bringing much annoyance to his excellent father. Mr. Ramsay, who knew both, tells us "that the evening of the judge's life was much clouded by the absurdity, eccentricity,

and mischievousness of his son James. A volume might be written upon that 'extraordinary young man." He was soon initiated into all the dissipation and vices of the city. Even then he was deluding himself and his friends by what was hereafter to become one of the great snares which led him into follies—the salving over his excesses by indulgence in soothing moral sentiments, and wholesome religious impressions; and he could write to a friend in this rather pharisaical strain: "I dare say it gives you much uneasiness to be amongst so profligate a set. I hope, by Divine assistance, you shall still preserve your amiable character amidst all the deceitful blandishments of vice and folly."

Among Boswell's fellow-students at the University was a young Englishman, William Johnson Temple, who had been sent, as was the fashion of the time, to pursue his studies at Edinburgh. With him, Boswell, who was ever of an affectionate disposition, contracted the warmest and most confidential friendship, which lasted, without any abatement, all their lives. They were of the same temperament, both being devoted to pleasure, and lax in conduct, yet with a strong religious "turn," as it is called. To him Boswell opened more of his heart than he did to any one: to him every trouble, every fit of low spirits, every temptation and "fall" even, were recounted with so strange a candour that the editor of these confidences could not venture to print them.

Temple in due course left Edinburgh for Cambridge, took orders, and, securing the patronage of Lord Lisburne, was given by him the rectory of Mamhead, in Devonshire, which he later exchanged for that of St. Gluvias, in Cornwall. He had literary tastes, and has left behind some works, now forgotten, such as

an "Essay on the Clergy, their Studies, Recreations, Doctrines," etc., "Political Memoirs," etc. Having known Gray, his little sketch of him was adopted by both Johnson and Mason, in their accounts of the poet. With Temple, as we said, his friend maintained an intimate correspondence for over thirty years, and the last letters he wrote, and the last dictated from his dying bed, were addressed to Temple. The latter seems to have preserved carefully every letter of Boswell's (indeed, Boswell had directed him to "paste them into a book"), and it must be said that, for native and genuine affectionate warmth, vivacity, and expression, they are remarkable productions. No one could have revealed his character with greater *naïveté:* he exhibits now tumultuous spirits, now vivacity, according to the mood; now the most extreme dejection and despair. His sketches of excursions, of characters, his little vanity in his own success, and his numerous "castles in the air," built on no foundation, with the most sanguine hopes, all are interesting and amusing.*

The fate of the letters was almost romantic, and their escape from destruction owing to an extraordinary chance.

"Many years ago a gentleman named Storer, having occasion to buy some small articles at the shop of Madame Noel, at Boulogne, observed that the paper in which they were wrapped was the fragment of an English letter. Upon inspection, a date and some names were discovered: and further investigation proved that the piece of paper in question was part of a correspondence, carried on nearly a century before, between the biographer of Johnson and his early friend, the Rev.

* One of Temple's sons became a lieutenant in the navy, and of his two daughters, one was married to the Rev. Mr. Powlett.

Mr. Temple. On making inquiry, it was ascertained that this piece of paper had been taken from a large parcel recently purchased from a hawker, who was in the habit of passing through Boulogne once or twice a year, for the purpose of supplying the different shops with paper. The whole contents of the parcel were immediately secured." As all this had rather a melodramatic, if not suspicious look, doubts were freely expressed at the time of their publication, in 1857. Of their genuineness, however, there can be no question, as the Rev. Mr. Elwin, a skilled and accomplished critic, who examined the papers, has assured me. It seems that, on Temple's death, all his papers passed into the possession of his son-in-law, who went to reside in France. From the purchaser the papers fell into the hands of his nephew, Mr. Augustus Boyse, who gave them to Mr. Bentley for publication.

Much discretion and suppression had to be used to fit the letters for presentation to the public, as our "Bozzy" had set down matter which few would dream of entrusting, by word of mouth even, to their most confidential friend. As Mr. Elwin wrote justly, "They undoubtedly furnish fresh and abundant proofs of the absurdity, the conceit, the profligacy, and the total absence of self-respect, which have made his name a name of reproach; but do they not also contain evidence of some nobler motives and some higher faculties?"

Another of his fellow-students was Henry Dundas, the "King Harry" of later years, who was destined to hold the patronage of Scotland in the hollow of his hand. Some forty years after, when Boswell was panting for place and promotion, he publicly appealed to this gentleman, reminding him of their old companionship, and on what good terms they had been at

college: an odd suggestion, which, as might be expected, produced not the smallest effect on the rather Philistine nature of the great man. But there was another acquaintance made, when he was only eighteen, and not likely to have been very profitable. He was introduced to Hume, whom he describes as "a most discreet, affable man, *as ever I met with*, and has really a great deal of learning, and a choice collection of books. He is indeed an extraordinary man—few such people are to be met with nowadays. We talk a great deal of genius, fine language, improving our style, etc., but I am afraid solid learning is much wore out. Mr. Hume, I think, *is a very proper person for a young man to cultivate an acquaintance with.*"

He was now attending Adam Smith's lectures; but attractions of other kinds were engrossing him. He had made the acquaintance at the theatre, with one of those unsuccessful beings who try one profession after another, with the one equal result of failure. This was Francis Gentleman, a pleasant Irishman who had been an officer in the army, and had taken to the stage. Boswell was always partial to natives of that country; and some of his best friends, such as Burke, Sheridan the elder, Captain Macbride, Goldsmith, Murphy, Malone, were Irish. Boswell warmly encouraged and assisted Gentleman, and the actor later dedicated a work to his patron in complimentary terms. He had also formed an intimacy with one Love, an actor and manager at the Edinburgh theatre, who gave lessons in elocution, and borrowed money from his pupils. This led to visits behind the scenes and acquaintance with actresses. We should all, however, be grateful to Mr. Love for one service he did to his pupil. He impressed on him earnestly the advantage of always keeping a

journal, and the young man soon began the practice. For being taken on circuit with his father and Sir David Dalrymple, he diligently set down all he observed. Thus Mr. Love may claim some little share in his pupil's immortal work.

Before he had completed his course he produced a piece on the Edinburgh boards, and, in his curious account of himself in the *European Magazine*, he, not without pride, gives the following account of the incident:—

"Lady Houston, sister of the late Lord Cathcart, put under his care a comedy, entitled, 'The Coquettes; or, The Gallant in the Closet;' with a strict injunction that its author should be concealed. Mr. Boswell, who was then very fond of the drama, and associated much with the players, got this comedy brought upon the stage, and wrote the prologue to it, which was spoken by Mr. Parsons. But it was not successful, being in truth *damned* the third night; and not unjustly, for it was found to be chiefly a translation of one of the bad plays of Thomas Corneille. Such, however, was the fidelity of Mr. Boswell, that although from his attending the rehearsals, and other circumstances, he was generally supposed to be the author of it himself, and consequently had the laugh and sneer of his country against him, he never mentioned by whom it was written; nor was it known till the discovery was made by the lady herself."

His father heard of this dissipation and of these loose pleasures, and removed him from Edinburgh, "placing him with a friend to prosecute the study of Roman law, to which he himself was devoted. At Auchinleck he gave him private instruction in this branch," which the son acknowledges, in his amusingly gracious style, as "a circumstance of singular benefit,

and of which Mr. Boswell has ever expressed a strong and grateful sense."

The chronology of this early period of Boswell's course is rather obscure; but we have two dates, at least, which are certain — that of his entrance into Glasgow University, and of his first visit to London. In the "matriculation album" of the University we find: "MDCCLIX., die Januarii 8vo, tempore viri Generosi, Jacobi Milliken de Milliken, rectoris Universitatis Glasguensis, est admissus Jacobus Boswell, filius natus maximus honorandi admodum viri Alexandri de Auchinleck armigeri, et suprœmæ apud Scotos, in criminibus, Curiæ senatoris."

But soon news reached Auchinleck of a strange, unprecedented escapade. Dr. Rogers has discovered, among the letters at Hailes Place, full evidence that the young Boswell had at this time turned Catholic, and was even thinking of becoming a priest! He had constantly attended the services, and it was reported had been formally received. This hitherto unsuspected incident throws light on many passages in the "Life of Johnson," and explains the sort of *penchant* or hankering which he always exhibited for Catholic doctrine.* It will be recollected how often he brought the subject of the Catholic religion under discussion; and how he strives, by opposition, to extract from Johnson favourable opinions of that faith. Johnson, it has been said, was at heart a Catholic; but without going so far as

* In the Croker papers there is a very sagacious letter of Mr. Croker's, pointing out the true method of Boswellian *exegesis*, but which, unhappily, he did not follow out in his own practice. Boswell revealed himself so sincerely and genuinely in his work, that from the study of his character, it was likely many obscurities would be cleared up. These passages—and there are many—he thought it would be impossible to understand, without taking account of Boswell's hyponchondria and other failings.

this, he certainly favoured Catholic doctrines. A man that could loathe the reformers and never hear of a monastery without wishing to fall on his knees and kiss the pavement, was hardly a Protestant of the last century. Boswell, like his friend, seems to have clung to the efficacy of prayers for the dead, and in one of their discussions on the doctrine of "the Real Presence" writes that it was "an aweful subject."

After he had been at Glasgow about a year, his father was to receive news that his erratic son "had gone off with an actress to London." Mr. Ramsay is the authority for this statement. He adds that the actress was of good character, and a Catholic; and this circumstance may have been in some way connected with the young man's supposed conversion. From what we know of his character and his warm temperament, he would have been eager to adopt the creed of his new "flame." At all events, it seems likely that his conversion and the elopement had some connection.

At Auchinleck his change of creed was thought an even more serious thing than the elopement. His father's friend, Sir David Dalrymple, wrote to the well-known Dr. Jortin, then in London, to find out the young man, and try what his persuasions could effect. On April 27, 1760, the divine wrote a letter, with an account of what he had attempted.

"Your young gentleman called at my house on Thursday noon, April 3rd. I was gone out for the day, and he seemed to be concerned at the disappointment, and proposed to come the day following. My daughter told him that I should be engaged at church, it being Good Friday. He then left your letter, and a note with it for me, promising to be with me on Saturday morning. But from that time to this I have heard

nothing of him. He began, I suppose, to suspect some design upon him, and his new friends and fathers may have represented me to him as an heretic and an infidel, whom he ought to avoid as he would the plague. I should gladly have used my best endeavours upon this melancholy occasion, but, to tell you the truth, my hopes of success would have been small. Nothing is more intractable than a fanatic. I heartily pity your good friend. If his son be really sincere in his new superstition, and sober in his morals, there is some comfort in that; for surely a man may be a papist and an honest man. It is not to be expected that the son should feel much for his father's sorrows."* But the ardour of the neophyte had already cooled. The restraints imposed upon conduct by the Catholic faith, and the rigid revision entailed by confession, were more likely to have disenchanted the new catechumen than any formal arguments. As he was later to explain to Dr. Johnson, he had passed through all the various stages of doubt and religious opinion. At first brought up on strict principles, he had been misled "into a certain degree of infidelity." He altogether passed by his lapse into Catholicity, but confessed he was fairly satisfied as to revelation, though not "clear" on every point held by the orthodox. Plunged into the dissipations of London, he was likely enough to have discarded his new principles with his mistress; and loose company, and friends like Dempster, did the rest. At any rate we hear no more of Mr. Boswell's "Catholic leanings," and this curious incident was never alluded to again.

* Dr. Rogers, "Boswelliana." From a letter of Dr. Jortin's preserved at New Hailes.

CHAPTER III.

"THE CUB AT NEWMARKET."

1760.

At this time we find Lord Auchinleck also in town, whither he had no doubt gone to look after his wayward son. He brought him down to Whitton, to wait on the Duke of Argyle. As Boswell tells us, "the duke talked some time with him, and was pleased, and seemed surprised that Boswell wanted to have a commission in the Guards. His Grace took Boswell's father aside, and said, 'My Lord, I like your son. That boy must not be shot at for three-and-sixpence a day.'" This had very much the air of an arranged scene between the duke and the father, and the young man seems to have been beguiled by the compliment which accompanied the refusal.

But his behaviour on this expedition was, in other ways, likely to give much annoyance to his worthy father. Later, he was fond of alluding to this, his first visit to town, which he represented as a sort of "junketting." In his little memoir he tells us that "he had acquired, from reading and conversation, an almost enthusiastic notion of the felicity of London, which he visited, for the first time, early in the year 1760, and his ardent expectations were not disappointed. He had

already given some specimens of a talent for writing in several occasional essays, both in prose and verse, without a name, and he soon obtained the acquaintance of many of the wits of the metropolis, having the late Mr. Derrick as his introductor into 'many-colour'd life,' or, as he has pleasantly expressed it, his *governor*." From certain grateful allusions, often repeated, he seemed eager to have it supposed that he came to town "under the wing," as it were, or patronage of Lord Eglinton. But Mr. Ramsay tells another story. He says that "Alexander, Earl of Eglinton, discovered him by chance in London *in very bad company*. He took him to his own house, and, thinking it the best way of redeeming him, gave him a view of the gay world." This receipt of the nobleman for reforming his *protégé*, though well meant, only confirmed him in his dissipated courses. Lord Eglinton was indeed little impressed by his frivolous charge, "whose lively imagination formed many schemes, but whose indolence hindered him from carrying them out." "Jamie," he would tell him, "you have a light head, but——" adding an illustration more coarse than complimentary.*

At this time his *protégé* seems unaccountably to have found a pride in his very "rawness" and rusticity, and in being a sort of butt for the English gentlemen. On one occasion, he was taken down by his patron to Newmarket, where a "whimsical adventure," as he chose to call it, but what was in reality a very pointless incident enough, occurred. Left to himself in the Jockey Club rooms, and being much stared at as a

* It was the same nobleman who once said to his brother and heir, Colonel Montgomerie, "If I live, Archie, I'll take care of you." "Then, my Lord," replied the colonel, "if you die I'll take care of mysel'." This seemed witty to old Lord Auchinleck and to his son.

stranger, the idea occurred to him of calling for pen and ink, and writing verses. As he was thus engaged, the racing gentlemen crowded round him, while an enormous personage approached, from whom he shrank in terror, thus causing roars of coarse laughter. Such, and literally no more, was the "whimsical incident"! and the young man thought it so exquisitely comical, that he put it all into verse, and published it, even to describing himself with unction as an uncouth "cub."

"And that your time I mayn't consume,
View him in the new Coffee Room.
There soon his noble Patron gay
Flies to his sportive friends away;
And the poor Being hums a song.
* * * * *
Sometime stock still he stood amazed,
And with a stupid wonder gazed,
Admired everything he saw;
Even spurs would his attention draw.
Sometime he, with an outward stride,
Would lift his legs from side to side."

He then describes himself:

"Plumpness shone in his countenance,
And belly prominent declared
That he for beef and pudding cared.
He had a large and ponderous head
That seemed to be composed of lead,
From which hung down such stiff lank hair,
As might the crows in Autumn scare."

Sir C. Sedley, a worthy knight, now—

"To the confounded *Put* comes near,
Tips him at once a friendly leer,"—

suggesting that he must be writing a history; when up came "a sprightly peer with switch of oak," and insisted that his friend should write something in rhyme.

"This last design was scarcely broached,
When lo! the monster fell approached.
Our clown . . .

Quailed timid, as, with horrid grin,
He saw him stroke his triple chin.
The affrighted animal would skulk,
And hide him from the *Enormous Bulk.*
You'll easily believe, my lord,
That this could no small fun afford."

And accordingly, "dukes, lords, and commons" joined in roars of laughter,—

"Eager a mighty joke to find,
Not one of 'em a sentence spoke,
With peals of laughter like to choke."

This production, pointless as it is, and offering a rather degrading picture of the writer, must have been hailed with delight by his friends. He was encouraged to publish it, and was actually privileged to read it to the "fiddling" Prince Edward, who gave him leave to dedicate it to him.*

In his preface he tells that the tale was true. "The hero of it is no other than the author himself." "It was indeed catching the merriment as it rose; for it was written in the Newmarket Coffee-room, in which the author, being elected a member of the Jockey Club, had the happiness of passing several sprightly good-

* This inscription is in the most free and easy style:—

"*To his Royal Highness, Edward, Duke of York.*

"SIR,—Permit me to take this method of thanking your Royal Highness for condescending to like the following sketch, or, in other words, permit me to let the world know that the same 'cub' has been laughed at by the Duke of York, has been read to your Royal Highness, by the genius himself, and warmed by the immediate beams of your kind indulgence. Had I been able to conceal this, I should have imagined that I had not the least spark of the enthusiasm of Parnassus in my composition. To be so deficient in vanity, if I am not mistaken, may be reckoned an inseparable characteristic of a poet. This trifle, sir, would not presume to interrupt you when engaged in matters of consequence. It only begs leave to pay its respects in an hour devoted to cheerful festivity. I wish your Royal Highness a long, a merry, and a happy life, and am, Your obliged servant," etc.

humoured evenings. After reciting the poem in mixed companies, he was seized with a longing to publish this pièce of wit without an instant's delay." He had sent up his work to Dodsley, who was not very forward in taking up the scheme. The author, on February 10, 1762, then wrote to the printer to take the matter in hand with all despatch, leaving for later consideration the choice of publisher.

Boswell to a Printer.

"SIR,—As you are the correspondent of my friend Mr. Donaldson, I shall, without any further introduction, give you a commission to execute for me. Some time ago I sent to London a poem entitled 'The Cub at Newmarket,' a tale, which is now lying in the hands of a Mr. James Dodsley, Bookseller, Pall Mall. Immediately upon receipt of this, please send the enclosed line to him for the above-mentioned essay, and, when you have got it, let it be put to the press with all expedition. I choose to publish for myself, and to take the chance of profit or loss; I know that small essays for the most part don't pay costs, but I shall venture this.

"If Mr. Dodsley pleases, his name can be put on the title-page with yours or any other English bookseller's. You may also add 'and for A. Donaldson, Edinburgh.' Make no delay, print it with the dedication and preface, just as they stand. Let no expense be spared to make it genteel. Let it be done on large quarto, and a good type. Price one shilling. Send me a proof of it as soon as it is thrown off, which I shall correct and return. This to be done without further notice from, Sir, your most humble Servant, JAMES BOSWELL."

Lord Eglington's kindness and hospitality were but ill requited by these freedoms. He had insisted on giving his *protégé* an apartment in his town house.

Boswell long after recalled this early patron with much affection. "All who knew his Lordship, will allow that his understanding and accomplishments were of no ordinary rate. From the gay habits which he had early acquired, he spent too much of his time with men, and in pursuits far beneath such a mind as his. He afterwards became sensible of it, and turned his thoughts to objects of importance; but was cut off in the prime of his life. I cannot speak of him, but with emotions of the most affectionate regret."

These follies would not have been tolerated, but for the good nature and good humour of the young fellow himself. Such often extenuate even greater faults, and with the world is a general passport. At the beginning, as at the end, Boswell was always *bon enfant*, chatty, amusing, absurd sometimes, but invariably good-humoured and good-natured.

Among the "bad company" from which Lord Eglington rescued him was that of Derrick, from whom Boswell boasted he had learned all that was knowable of "fast life" upon town. He affectionately called him his "governor," and gratefully acknowledged that he introduced him generally. Later, Derrick—a ready, shifty creature enough—became Master of Ceremonies at Bath. "Poor Derrick," adds his pupil, "I remember him with kindness;" but, after his odd fashion, our chronicler took care to record what could belittle his friend.*

* One of Derrick's travelling letters from Ireland is addressed to "James Boswell, Esqre." Johnson praised this gentleman's readiness of reply, when he was surprised sleeping "on a bulk" in the street.

After the London trip of 1760, Lord Eglington had asked Boswell and Derrick, with some other friends, to his castle. When he and Mr. Home were walking in the dining-room, Boswell quoted some verses—

> "Unless my lines portray my fame,
> And those who choose to read them, cry
> 'I knew him! Derrick was his name,
> In yonder tomb his ashes lie.'"

Which on the instant, Mr. Home, we are told, thus "happily parodied"—

> "Unless my deeds portray my fame,
> And he who passes sadly sings,
> 'I knew him! Derrick was his name,
> On yonder tree his carcass swings.'"

In which there is surely but little point and no "happy parody," nor indeed meaning.

Among his other freaks we find that he had about this time, unknown to his father, entered himself a student at the Inner Temple, with the view of going to the English Bar. This caprice, for it can be considered as nothing else, did not go beyond the first step. But it would have been as distasteful to his father, had he ever heard of it, as his plan for the army. Boswell attempted several times during his course to enter at one of the English Inns of Court, but in this uncertain hesitating way.*

* "*Boswell, Jacobus*, Armiger, filius et hæres apparens Honorabilis Domini Auchinleck de Britann' Boreal—generaliter admissus est in Societatem istius Coitivæ, in consideratione trium Librarum sex Solidorum, et octo denariorum præmanibus solut: decimo nono die Novembris Annoque Domini 1761°."—*From the Books of the Society.*

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE AT EDINBURGH.

AFTER this escapade, we find the young Boswell, in the May of the following year, 1761, settled at Edinburgh. His visit to town had thoroughly disgusted him with the provincial capital. He did not the less indulge himself in such pleasures as the place afforded. "Some disagreeable reports" of his excesses travelled to his friend Temple, at Cambridge. "I grant you," wrote Mr. Boswell, "that my behaviour has not been entirely as it ought to be. A young fellow whose happiness was always centred in London, who had at least got there, and had begun to taste its delights, who had got his mind filled with the most gay ideas,—getting into the Guards, being about Court, enjoying the happiness of the *beau monde* and the company of men of genius, in short everything that he could wish,—consider this poor fellow hauled away to the town of Edinburgh, obliged to conform to every Scotch custom or be laughed at—'Will you hae some jeel? oh fie! oh fie!'—his flighty imagination quite cramped, and he obliged to study Corpus Juris Civilis, and live in his father's strict family; is there any wonder, Sir, that the unlucky dog should be somewhat fretful?" This is amusingly characteristic; and for the rest of his life Mr. Boswell

was to exhibit the same repulsion to native habits, and to the question, "Will you hae some jeel?"

He appears to have been early introduced into those convivial or buffooning societies, which then flourished at Edinburgh,—a compliment, as he fancied it, to his own social powers; though he was rather welcomed as a butt of the first order. One of these he himself founded, which was called "the Soaping Club," whose motto was "Let every man soap his own beard;" that is, "Let every man indulge his own humour." Their favourite "game" was a so-called facetious one, "Snip, snap, snorum;"—a not very high form of humour. His friend, Captain Erskine, in suitably doggerel lines, gratefully acknowledged that he was introduced to this society under his high patronage.

> "You kindly took me up, an awkward cub,
> And introduced me to the Soaping Club,
> Where, every Tuesday eve, our ears are blest
> With genuine humour and with genuine jest.
> Say, who would e'er indulge in a yawn or nap,
> When Barclay roars forth 'Snip' and Bainbridge 'Snap'?"

Throughout his life Boswell, when he was excited by wine, became boisterous, and under the delusion that his wit was thereby inspired. His own too candid account of his behaviour to Miss Monckton, when in this condition, is a good specimen. Most of his countrymen, however, have the art of "carrying their liquor discreetly" and silently, like the good Baron of Bradwardine.

"At this early period," he confides to us, "he was flattered by being held forth as a patron of literature; for Mr. Francis Gentleman published at the elegant press of the *Foulis's* the tragedy of *Oroonoko*, altered from Southerne, and inscribed it to him in a poetical epistle, concluding thus, in the person of his Muse:—

"But when with honest pleasure she can find
Sense, taste, religion, and good-nature join'd,
There gladly will she raise her feeble voice,
Nor fear to tell that BOSWELL is her choice."

This gentleman was one of those odd adventurers who "hung loose upon society," and a sad plague to Mr. Garrick. Another of Boswell's friends was Mr. Colquet, "one of the ministers of the Church of England Chapel at Edinburgh, a man who had lived much in the world, and, with other qualities, was eminent for gay sociality. Mr. Boswell thus speaks of him:—

"'And he owns that Ned Colquet the priest
May to something of humour pretend;
And he swears that he is not in jest,
When he calls this same Colquet his friend.'

"'We' (*i.e.* Boswell) 'cannot but observe that there are traits in it which time has not yet altered. As, for instance,—

"'Boswell does women adore,
And never once means to deceive;
He's in love with at least half a score,
If they're serious he smiles in his sleeve.'

And that egotism and self-applause which he is still displaying, yet, it would seem, with a conscious smile:

"'—— Boswell is modest enough,
Himself not *quite* PHŒBUS he thinks.'

And, again:

"'He has all the bright fancy of youth,
With the judgment of forty and five;
In short, to declare the plain truth,
There is no better fellow alive.'

"Having an uncommon desire for the company of men distinguished for talents and literature, he was fortunate enough to get himself received into that of those who were considerably his superiors in age; such

as Lord Elibank, Lord Kames, Sir David Dalrymple, Dr. Robertson, Dr. Blair, Mr. David Hume, Dr. Carlyle, Mr. Andrew Stuart, and others; and was admitted a member of the *Select Society* of Edinburgh." * A more distinguished associate was Lord Somerville, who encouraged him to seek more refined company. Boswell gratefully recalled these early attentions. "Let me here express my grateful remembrance of Lord Somerville's kindness to me, at a very early period. He was the first person of high rank that took particular notice of me in the way most flattering to a young man, fondly ambitious of being distinguished for his literary talents; and by the honour of his encouragement made me think well of myself, and aspire to deserve it better. Never shall I forget the hours which I enjoyed with him at his apartments in the royal palace of Holyrood House, and at his seat near Edinburgh, which he himself had formed with an elegant taste."

But it was when he indulged in what were called "occasional verses" that he revealed the weak side of his disposition, and an absence of self-respect, while he fancied he was compelling respect. This excited the laughter of his friends. In these productions, praise, or description of himself and his peculiarities, as in "The Cub," were the themes which he fancied were most interesting to his hearers or readers. It seems incredible that a man should compose and sing a song, ridiculing himself and his own character, mistaking the laughter which he invited for appreciation.

"B——, of Soapers the king,
On Tuesdays at Tom's does appear,
And when he does talk, or does sing,
To him ne'er a one can come near;

* Boswell's Memoir, in the *European Magazine*.

For he talks with such ease and such grace,
That all charm'd to attention we sit,
And he sings with so comic a face,
That our sides are just ready to split.

"B—— is pleasant and gay,
For frolic by nature design'd;
He heedlessly rattles away
When the company is to his mind.
'This maxim,' he says, 'you may see,
We can never have corn without chaff;'
So not a bent sixpence cares he,
Whether *with* him or *at* him you laugh.

"B—— does women adore,
And never once means to deceive,
He's in love with at least half a score;
If they're serious he smiles in his sleeve.
He has all the bright fancy of youth,
With the judgment of forty and five.
In short, to declare the plain truth,
There is no better fellow alive."

No doubt at this time, as always, he was an amusing fellow enough, owing to this readiness to talk and furnish entertainment, at his own expense. Still, there was truth in the compliment one of his teachers, Professor Smith, paid him, "that he was happily possessed of a *facility of manners!*"—"to use the very words of the professor," adds Boswell, trumpeting it to his friends, "which, upon my honour, were addressed to me—I can produce the letter in which they are to be found;"—a characteristic touch.

It was in the summer of 1761, that Thomas Sheridan, the elocutionist and actor, came to Edinburgh to give lectures and teach the Scotch lawyers how to get rid of their uncouth brogue. It is amusing to find what pains the Scotch gentlemen took in this laudable pursuit of acquiring "the English accent." "Mr. David Rae, advocate, when he pleaded in appeals at the bar of the House of Lords, used to speak a strange kind of

English by way of avoiding Scotch. In particular he pronounced the termination *tion*, as in petition, very open, that he might not sound it *shin*, as is done in Scotland. Mr. Nairne, advocate, said Mr. Rae has shone—*tion*—more in the House of Lords than any man."

Boswell became one of his pupils, and, under his instruction, took much pains to get rid of the native accent. His friend Love, the actor, also gave him lessons in this important branch. Some years later he appealed to Johnson to pronounce what success had been obtained by such exertion, and was told, "Sir, your pronunciation is not offensive"—no very encouraging praise. "With this concession," says the pupil, "I was obliged to be content." More interesting to him, however, was the account the professor would give of the great sage, and with such spirit, that the pupil was seized with a longing to know him intimately. Sheridan was to him, he says, "a very kind friend;" for he lent him a substantial sum of money to pay off some gaming debts—taking his promise that he would not play again for three years. This was a striking and remarkable act on the part of a mere elocution-master, who was himself sunk in difficulties.

The young man, it must be said, did not confine himself to the mere toping clubs, but showed a laudable ambition to figure in better company. As we have seen, he was admitted into a club of very high pretensions, the well-known "Select Society," which has perhaps been vaunted beyond its merits. In 1761 it set on foot an extraordinary project for altogether refining the Scotch language, so that it should become like the English both in purity and pronunciation—in other words, for abolishing the native "Doric." Of this society

Lord Auchinleck was one of the presidents. Mr. Sheridan gave his instructions in the chapel of St. Paul's, to an immense audience of ladies and gentlemen, for four weeks, and more than three hundred gentlemen of the first rank entered their names on his list. Every one now began to affect extreme nicety of pronunciation in their ordinary discourse. "Even the grave academic doctors gave way to the prevailing fashion; and Dr. Robertson was so enamoured with it, that he 'sported' on all occasions his progress in speaking English." The professor having proposed to publish his lectures, received a great number of subscriptions, but "the long interval between the receiving of the subscription money and the publication"—thus delicately was the charge made—"exposed him to many attacks."

In the winter of 1762, Mallet, or Mallock, had brought out a parody at Drury Lane, called "Elvira," one of the "Tig and Tirry" pieces to which Garrick was unaccountably partial. This furnished an opportunity for the exercise of the satirical powers of young Boswell and of two of his friends, Captain Erskine and Mr. George Dempster. It was entitled "Critical Strictures on 'Elvira,'" and the authors were exceedingly merry at the expense of their countryman.*

* I once possessed a copy of this exceedingly scarce production, of which I believe not another could now be found. There is no copy in the British Museum, or, indeed, in any library. This copy has unluckily been lost, but in a note to my "Life of Garrick" there is a quotation or two from it. In this rather flippant production, it was stated that every scene in the play "was an interview. All the thoughts were poor; and they were, moreover, stolen. Dryden said that Ben Jonson was everywhere to be traced in the snow of the ancients: we may say that Mallock is everywhere to be traced in the puddle of the moderns. Instead of beauties, he has picked out what is despicable, like a pickpocket who dives for handkerchiefs, not for gold, and contents himself with what he finds in our great-coat pockets, without attempting

With Captain Andrew Erskine, a young officer of literary tastes, quartered in Edinburgh, he contracted an ardent friendship. He was of the Kellie family, and belonged to the 71st Regiment. The two young men, it is evident, thought themselves brilliant fellows enough, with much power of repartee and knowledge of life on town. From writing verses of an off-hand kind which figured in the magazines, they presently began to think they were actual *litérateurs* and critics; so that, after exchanging their letters for about a year, they determined to publish them, with their names. This volume made its appearance in 1763, in London,—issued, no doubt, at their own expense. The letters were in a forced style, with an affectation of being "agreeable rattles," and with much attempted wit and banter. Boswell's is perhaps the worse performance of the two; but it must have been an excess of youthful vanity that could have prompted them to thrust their private confidences on the public. More extraordinary still is it, that any one in our time should have thought of reprinting these crude juvenile efforts.*

our watch. He has introduced a rebellion unparalleled in any history. The prince enters an apartment in the palace with a drawn sword. This forms a rebellion. The king enters the same apartment without a drawn sword. This quashes the rebellion. The good man lets his rebellious subjects out of prison to chat with them." In this rattling, vivacious style is the author ridiculed. We cannot, of course, distinguish Boswell's share.

* Boswell at this time practised his pen in *The Scot's Magazine*, though I have failed to trace any of these earlier productions. In his warm-hearted, natural way, he long after paid a tribute to this early friend. "I suppose that every young author has had the same kind of feeling for the magazine or periodical publication which has first entertained him, and in which he has first had an opportunity to see himself in print, without the risk of exposing his name. I myself recollect such impressions from *The Scots Magazine*, which was begun at Edinburgh in the year 1739, and has been ever conducted with judgement, accuracy, and propriety. I yet cannot help thinking of it with an affectionate regard."

An idea of the sort of "wit" that so delighted the young correspondents may be gathered from the story of Lady B——, who had been frightened by a turkey-cock. This poorish incident convulsed them both with merriment. Mr. Boswell actually prepared an ode on the adventure, which was begged and borrowed by friends. "Lady B——'s terror for the turkey-cock," wrote Boswell, "diverts me extremely. Did they but come to an engagement how noble must it be! I shall certainly write something astonishing upon it." In a short time he was enabled to announce, "At length, O Erskine! Lady B—— and her turkey-cock are sung in strains sublime! I have finished an ode. It is one of the greatest productions of human nature. I am sure that my ode is great. Mr. James Bruce, the gardener, declares that it is quite to his mind. He stood by my side while I took my portrait of the cock, from a large one which struts upon the green." *

Thus early we see Boswell's lack of good taste and propriety in advertising publicly the name of a lady of position, and exhibiting her ridiculously, while fancying he was paying her a compliment. His friend sent him, in return, an ode on "Three kittens, who were born on the same day that he certainly was."

* Then follows the "Ode on an Engagement between the Right Honourable Lady B—— and a Turkey Cock:"—

"See the imperious Turkey Cock
Of size, like Ardennes' rock.
See him in rage advance,
Like Marechal Turenne,
The warlike boast of France.
* * * * *
Upon her natal day
Let amorous Boswell tune the festive lay,
Let him be plac'd beside her at the board,
Round which the generous sons of Kellie sit,
Who with the daughters fair, afford
Sense, beauty, music, wit."

Nor were these the only exercises of the two young men. There was "An Ode to Tragedy," announced as written "by a gentleman of Scotland," a description of whom he sent to his friend. "At length it comes, it comes! The author is a most excellent man. He is of an ancient family in the west of Scotland, on which he values himself not a little. His parts are bright and his education has been good. He is fond of seeing much of the world. He eats of every good dish, especially apple-pie. He drinks old hock. He has a very fine temper. He is somewhat of a humourist, and a little tinctured with pride. He has a good manly countenance, and he owns himself to be amorous. He has infinite vivacity, yet is observed at times to have a melancholy cast. He is rather fat than lean, rather short than tall, rather young than old. His shoes are neatly made, and he never wears spectacles." *

It is amazing to think of his printing such a portrait of himself. To add to the mystification, the ode, which was written by "a gentleman of Scotland" was "dedicated to James Boswell, Esquire." "It afterwards appeared," writes James Boswell, Esquire, himself, in a notice prefixed to the letters, that the ode "was written by Mr. Boswell himself."†

Boswell's ardour for publishing at this early period

* This makes about the fifth or sixth portrait of this kind, of which Boswell drew of himself, to entertain the public.

† In the dedication to James Boswell, Esq., by Boswell himself, were these passages—

"My dear Sir,—Be that as it may, give me leave to thank you for your particular kindness to me, and chiefly for the profound respect with which you have always treated me." . . . "The following ode which awaits your acceptance is on a subject grave and solemn, and therefore may be considered by many people not so well suited to your volatile disposition,"—with much more in the same style.

was extraordinary. He had formed a close friendship with Donaldson, the Edinburgh bookseller and publisher, who gave him dinners, and allowed him to look over his publications in proof or manuscript, which the young man considered amounted to being his professional "reader." He was also constantly issuing odes and poems, whose importance he strove to magnify. In his exuberance, our hero fancied that the world was engrossed in speculations upon him and his doings. Thus a report had gone round that he was to be married! "In the name of everything that is upside-down, what could the people mean by marrying me! If they had boiled me into portable soup, I should not have been greatly surprised. A man who has so deeply pondered on the wonders daily presented to us on view, and who has experienced so many vicissitudes of fortune as I have done, can easily make allowance for stranger things than these, but I own this matrimonial system exceeds my comprehension."

His great friend often warned him never to laugh at himself, but without effect. Occasionally the vivacious youth sparkled into an epigram; indeed, through his life he fancied he had a special turn for writing such quips, neatly and pointedly. Here was one—

> "Your wife (cries Jones) I think is queer,
> Brings a fresh bantling every year.
> James, let me tell you, I have wondered,
> That yours produced not a hundred."

Unintelligible as this is, it no doubt passed for "wit" among unlicensed jesters of the Parliament Close, and the gentlemen of the Soaping Club.

Encouraged by the success of one mystification, such as it was, he now indulged himself in another quite as unmeaning. Some verses, "Elegy on the Death of

an Amiable Young Lady," had not found a place in a miscellany then about to be published, and it occurred to him that it would be highly humorous to publish it separately, introducing it by some comic letters from his friends Erskine and George Dempster, also with one from himself, ridiculing the composition thus: "I cannot conclude without a eulogium upon the justice and propriety of that line, when, drawing to a close, he exclaims with all the rapture and poetic fury of a Pythian priestess, 'I cease, I cease the empty lay.' I am persuaded no mortal can read this without a conscious heartfelt satisfaction." "They were sent to Mr. Donaldson with the intention to be published in the second volume of his poems, which will appear next winter, but, upon being examined by some gentlemen of taste, they were thought to have so much merit, that they are here offered to the public." To carry on the jest, letters of criticism by Mr. George Dempster, Captain Erskine and Boswell himself were prefixed, full of ironical praises of such lines as, "Thou numbered her among the numerous dead," and "Adieu, adieu, a long, a last farewell."

These exercises, jejune as they were, exhibited at least the young man's overpowering longing to "appear in print." They furnished, too, one more of the puzzles connected with Boswell's character; for we may wonder how the author of these affected productions could ever have become the sober, judicious author of the "Life of Johnson." *

* As this early friend, Erskine, now disappears from the scene, I may quote here Dr. Rogers' account, given in his life of Boswell, printed for the Grampian Club. "In 1764, Erskine published a drama entitled 'She's not Him, and He's not Her; a Farce in Two Acts, as it is performed in the Theatre in the Canongate." In 1773 he issued 'Town Eclogues,' a poem of

Towards the close of the year 1762, we find that our hero had once more contrived to visit London. He had somewhat artfully persuaded his father that he intended prosecuting a course of legal study there; or it might be that he hoped to find some means of carrying out his new project of entering the Guards. It is curious to think of "Jamie Boswell" as a soldier, and of what we might have lost had he adopted that profession. But in other ways, it would have been disastrous to one of his character.

This scheme he had been ardently pressing on his father, and in April, 1762, he had certainly obtained some promise of a commission, for we find him writing to Temple that he had now "pretty good hopes of

twenty-two quarto pages, intended 'to expose the false taste for florid description which prevails in modern poetry.' From the 71st, Erskine in 1763 exchanged into the 24th Regiment, in which he became captain. Retiring from the army, he settled at Edinburgh. There he resided after 1790 with his sister, Lady Colville, at Drumsheugh, near the Dean Bridge. He was an extraordinary pedestrian, and walked nearly every morning to Queensferry, about ten miles distant, where he breakfasted at Hall's Inn. He dispensed with attendance, and when he had finished his repast, left payment under a plate. He was of a tall, portly form, and to the last wore gaiters and a flapped vest. Though satirical with his pen, he was genial and humorous in conversation. He was an early admirer and occasional correspondent of the poet Burns. Like his brother, 'the musical Earl of Kellie,' he was a lover of Scottish melodies, and was one of a party of amateurs who associated with Mr. George Thomson in designing his 'Collection of Scottish Airs.' Several songs from his pen, Burns, in a letter to Mr. Thomson, written in June, 1793, described as 'pretty,' adding, 'His love-song is divine.' The composition so described, beginning 'How sweet this lone vale,' became widely popular; but the opening stanza only was composed by him. His habits were regular, but he indulged occasionally at cards, and was partial to the game of whist. Having sustained a serious loss at his favourite pastime he, in September, 1793, threw himself into the Forth, and perished. In a letter to Mr. Thomson, dated October, 1791, Burns writes that the tidings of Erskine's death had distressed and 'scared' him."

getting into the Guards, that gay scene of life of which I have been so long and so violently enamoured." He no doubt counted on the patronage of the Duke of York.

He arrived in London at the beginning of November, 1762, in the hope of finally arranging the business. He had a recommendation, as he tells us in his memoir, to the worthy Duke of Queensbury; but fancied that there was a secret understanding with his father that his wishes were not to be gratified. At this season, a change is to be noted in his tastes and character. A more sensible and wholesome tone is discernible, with a greater sobriety and steadiness. His friend Temple allowed him, for a small rent, the use of his chambers in town. But he had to share these quarters with Temple's brother, a youth of seventeen who was looking out for a commission. This young fellow, "Bob," he at first welcomed as agreeable. But he soon began to find him an annoyance.

"His genius and application," he said, "consisted in washing his face and brushing his hat, which he will execute in a few hours;" and he presently declared—"I find it somewhat inconvenient to have anybody in chambers with me. . . I have allowed him to be too free with me; and I own it hurts me when I find my folly bringing me into the situation of being upon an equality with if not below the young man." Later he wrote some doggerel on the youth:—

"Bob Temple has at Sarum been,
And all the pretty girls has seen;
But he came back in the machine
Because he was the barber!

"From Mother Bowles he got good wine;
He licked his lips and called it fine;
But now the dog at Cliff's must dine,—
And is not that the barber?"

Presently he began to borrow guineas and make himself noisy and generally obnoxious, on which Mr. Boswell found out that he was selfish, and of a heedless disposition. "For Bob is a pretty, genteel, lively boy; but you must make him acquire some more knowledge, else his stock will soon be exhausted. I find it somewhat inconvenient to have anybody in chambers with me. I wish you had him down at Cambridge with you." He at last fairly turned him out. But the general sketch of this youth is excellent.

Boswell's character is full of perplexing turns: but one of these puzzles is to find him at this early stage, while on pleasure bent, seeking the acquaintance of celebrated and accomplished literary men, and succeeding at once. There is one key, however, which opens the most exclusive gates—a certain bonhomie of nature, which furnishes entertainment and pleases. Society in general is even more selfish than it is exclusive: and in all times we have found princes and nobles willing to receive pleasant good-humoured persons, who accept baiting and badgering with good-humour, and who are inclined to exhibit their character without restraint. Such, I fancy, was Boswell, who was much helped by his own "facility of manners." We find him making acquaintances of all kinds. He contrived to know Goldsmith, Wilkes, Bonnell Thornton, and even Churchill; he was showing a judicious hospitality in little parties, given at his lodgings and taverns. Before he became acquainted with Johnson he appears to have been about four months in town, having arrived at the close of the year 1762, and was fairly *lancé*.

Young as he was, Boswell was afflicted with that malady, as it may be called, which hindered him through life, and which is an excuse for many failings in his

character,—an overpowering depression, and sinking of the spirits. His friend Temple, who was in town after the acquaintance with Johnson had been made, was now the recipient of these sorrows; and no doubt Boswell found a relief in imparting to him all his dismal feelings. As he tells him, "Retirement has always sunk my spirits; and I cannot say that I ever had any uneasy sensations upon coming to town, although I had not been accustomed to a town for some time. What is remarkable in my case is, that I am not fond of much society, but, on the contrary, choose to live a good deal by myself. But then, in London you can either have or want company, just as you please, so that you enjoy perfect freedom." This confession that society and dissipation drove the "black dog" away, while it was chiefly in the "retirement" (*i.e.* the stupidity) of the country that his spirits became oppressed, offers a not very uncommon reason for depression.

He still, however, lingered on in town, in very purposeless fashion, but was so engrossed with its enjoyments that his father at last began to lose patience. In May we find that the young man had to write to Sir David Dalrymple, to intercede with his father, who threatened to disinherit him. "Tell him to have patience with me for a year or two, and I may be what he pleases."* This was a serious threat, and it brought him to his senses. A month later a sort of compromise was arranged, and his father decided that he should go over to Utrecht and study the civil law—a plan which he accepted, to the gratification of the judge, who was pleased to find in him so prudent a disposition. It is evident that Boswell had got rather "out of hand," but was now sobered. As he wrote to Sir David—

* Rogers' "Memoir."

"My great object is to attain a proper conduct in life. How sad it will be if I turn out no better than I am! I have much vivacity, which leads me to dissipation and folly. This I think I can restrain. But I will be moderate, and not aim at a stiff sageness and buckram correctness. I must, however, own to you that I have at bottom a melancholy cast, which dissipation relieves by making me thoughtless, and therefore an easier though a more contemptible animal. I dread a return of this malady. I am always apprehensive of it."*

But when this arrangement was made, it became difficult to fix the volatile James to his purpose. "I have had a long letter from my father," he wrote to Temple, "full of affection and good counsel. Honest man! he is now very happy: it is amazing to think how much he has had at heart my pursuing the road of civil life; he is anxious for fear I should fall off from my prudent system, and return to my dissipated, unsettled way of thinking; and, in order to make him easy, he insists on having my solemn promise that I will persist, etc. . . . My dear friend, I find that London must be the place where I shall pass a great part of my life, if I wish to pass it with satisfaction. I hope we shall spend many happy years there, when we are both settled as to views and habits of living; in the meantime, let me strive to acquire steadiness and constant propriety of conduct, without which we can never enjoy what we fondly hope." But with all these resolutions he was still reluctant to comply with his father's wishes, and he confided to a friend that "he was afraid his father would force him to be a lawyer." These little compromises between actual pleasure and fine theoretical morality are highly characteristic of this

* Ibid.

curious nature. He was, however, to find a fresh excuse for further delay, in the contraction of that important acquaintance which was to be the event of his life, and give him his title to fame.

One might fairly wonder, looking at the loose, unprincipled characters with whom Boswell contracted friendship in his earlier days, that he did not meet with utter shipwreck, and have gone, as it is called, "altogether to the bad." Wilkes was alone sufficient to do the mischief: but he had also contracted friendship with a number of shady adventurers, who must have only thought of making profit out of a young man of good connection and prospects. Among these were Gentleman, Derrick, Ross the player, and his too notorious wife. This sort of company had an oddity which was an attraction for him.

He had unluckily fallen in with a countryman of his own, George Dempster, a man of extraordinary ability, but who held loose opinions which he appears to have learned from Hume. These he enforced with much scoffing. He later shocked Dr. Johnson, who made the indignant declaration, "that he had not met for a long time with any man who had given him such general displeasure. He is totally confused in his principles, and wants to puzzle other people." Dempster succeeded in puzzling Boswell, and the companionship of such a man, assisted by Mr. Wilkes, was not long in effecting a reconversion. No one who has not studied Wilkes's life, or has gone through his papers, can form a conception what a depraved being he was, and what an ingrained, almost satanic corruption infected him. Contact with such a person must have been almost fatal, and, in spite of his naturally good impulses, it is likely that Boswell never recovered from the effects of the hateful influence.

CHAPTER V.

FIRST INTRODUCTION TO JOHNSON.

1763.

In a pleasant unaffected passage, which bespeaks his thoroughly genuine nature, Boswell introduces the familiar incidents of his first introduction to Dr. Johnson. "This is, to me," he says, "a memorable year; for in it I had the happiness to obtain the acquaintance of that extraordinary man whose memoirs I am now writing; an acquaintance which I shall ever esteem as one of the most fortunate circumstances in my life. Though then but two and twenty, I had for several years read his works with delight and instruction, and had the highest reverence for the author, which had grown up in my fancy into a kind of mysterious veneration, by figuring to myself a state of solemn abstraction in which I supposed him to live in the immense metropolis of London." He had been promised an introduction by both Derrick and Sheridan; but the former "never found an opportunity;" which made the ardent young man suspect that he was promising what he could not perform: while Sheridan had unluckily quarrelled with Johnson. In this state of things Boswell had to content himself with the assistance of a humbler agent, the bookseller Davies, who lived in

Russell Street, Covent Garden, at what is now, I believe, a wig-maker's shop.

"Tom" Davies was rather a remarkable character, and his life offered a sort of adventurous cast. He was actor, bookseller, and writer, and has left some works of dramatic criticism, with an indifferent but entertaining life of Garrick. He was, however, peculiarly sensitive and touchy, if not quarrelsome: so much so that a single line in Churchill's "Rosciad" literally drove him from the stage. This was to the effect that "he mouthed his sentences as curs mouth a bone." The image of that terrible bruiser sitting in the pit "near the spikes" with his eye upon him, agitated him with such terror that he could not endure it, and he fled from the stage.*

The scene is familiar, almost too familiar to be repeated: but it is one of the best in his book.

Davies, who was good-natured, had often invited the young man to tea, but the doctor failed to come as he had promised. The persevering Boswell, however, pre-

* It is curious that so little is known of this rather interesting specimen of the bookseller. "I once," says Mr. John Taylor, "had an opportunity of seeing Davies act, long after he had left the stage, when a benefit was given to him at Drury Lane Theatre; but whether during the management of Garrick, I do not recollect, though I believe it was granted by him. The play was 'The Way of the World,' and Davies was announced in the part of Fainall. There was a dull gravity in his acting, and his voice had a rumbling tone. He became embarrassed, and I believe died in a state of insolvency. His 'very pretty wife,' as Churchill calls her, I saw when I called on her husband. She was plain but neat in her attire, and in face and person exhibited the remains of beauty that justified the poet's panegyric. She had a meek, dejected look, probably resulting from the situation of her husband, and the recollections of better days. She had been an actress of respectable but not distinguished talents, and maintained an unimpeachable character through life. I regret to add, that, after all her moral and professional merits, I have heard she ended her days in a workhouse some years after the death of her husband."

sented himself repeatedly, and was rewarded for his pains. "At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back parlour,* after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr. Davies, having perceived him through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us,—he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, 'Look, my Lord, it comes.' Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, 'Don't tell where I come from.'—'From Scotland,' cried Davies, roguishly. 'Mr. Johnson,' said I, 'I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it.' But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression 'come from Scotland,' which I used in the sense of being of that country; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, 'That, Sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help.' This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: 'What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams.' Eager to

* "No. 8," says Boswell unaffectedly, "the very place where I was fortunate enough to be introduced to the illustrious subject of this work. . . . I never pass it without feeling reverence and regret." It was then just opposite to "Tom's Coffee House," later the "Caledonian Coffee House."

take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, 'O, Sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you.' 'Sir,' said he, with a stern look, 'I have known David Garrick longer than you have done: and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject.' Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil. I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth, had not my ardour been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from making any further attempts. Fortunately, however, I remained upon the field not wholly discomfited; and was soon rewarded by hearing some of his conversation.

"Davies followed me to the door; and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, 'Don't be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well.'"

By this pleasingly described scene we can discover that the young man had made an impression. The great man could not but have been flattered at the awe which he inspired, and must have been pleased at his own smart saying. Murphy used to describe the scene with much humour to friends, giving particularly an imitation of the "knock down" retort as to the coming from Scotland.*

* Mr. Murphy always described the meeting as though he himself had witnessed it. "Upon another occasion," he says, "this writer went with him (Johnson) into the shop of Davies the book-

After about a week's interval he ventured to call on the doctor, and was well received; and, again, we are struck with the pleasant readiness of the young visitor, and his knowledge of human nature—as when he repeated to the doctor Blair's flattering speech of him about the giant being in his den. The giant pressed him to stay, when he rose to go, shaking him cordially by the hand, and also promised to spend an evening at his lodgings. It is evident he was pleased with the natural frankness of his visitor, for the latter says that, in looking back, he was astonished at his own freedom and at the "indulgence" with which the doctor received it. Boswell, either from dissipation or carelessness, now allowed three weeks to elapse without seeing him. When he waited on him, "He again shook me by the hand at parting, and asked me why I did not come oftener to him. Trusting that I was now in his good graces, I answered that he had not given me much encouragement, and reminded him of the check I had received from him at our first interview. 'Poh, poh!'

seller. Davies came running to him, almost out of breath, with joy: 'The Scots gentleman is come, sir; his principal wish is to see you; he is now in the back parlour.' 'Well, well, I'll see the gentleman,' said Johnson. He walked towards the room. Mr. Boswell was the person. The writer followed with no small curiosity." He then quotes Boswell's saying of coming from Scotland, as though it began the conversation. Boswell, who had read this passage, disputes its accuracy. Mr. Murphy's memory, he contended, "at the end of near thirty years has undoubtedly deceived him, and he supposes himself to have been present at a scene which he has probably heard inaccurately described by others. In my note taken on the very day, in which I am confident I marked everything that passed, no mention is made of this gentleman; and I am sure that I should not have omitted one so well known to the literary world." It will be noted, however, that Boswell himself cannot recollect whether Murphy was present or not, but only appeals to his note. It may have been that Murphy merely wished to have a peep at the enthusiastic Scots gentleman, and having satisfied his curiosity, went away.

said he, with a complacent smile, 'never mind these things. Come to me as often as you can. I shall be glad to see you.'" Then followed meetings at eating-houses, where there was "a mode of dining, or rather of being fed," as Boswell puts it in his lively fashion, at various taverns and at the Mitre. The doctor was, indeed, so pleased with him, that he called out, "Give me your hand; I have taken a liking to you." It is amusing to find that our hero made no confession of his lapse into Catholic opinions—a point on which he is silent all through his work. Then followed more meetings at taverns and at Boswell's lodgings, from which it is clear the doctor found entertainment in the company of his new friend. One night, or morning rather, they met near Temple Bar about one in the morning, and the young man proposed that they should visit the Mitre. "Sir," said his friend, "it is too late; *they won't let us in.* But I'll go with you another night with all my heart."

Boswell wrote accounts of these meetings to his friend Temple, adding small particulars which are not found in his printed journal, such as the following:—"We sat (on July 14th) till between two and three. He took me cordially by the hand and said, 'My dear Boswell, I love you very much.' Now, Temple, can I help indulging vanity?"* The image of Johnson, as

* Commentators on Boswell's "Johnson" may compare the report in the text with that given in the letters. Thus, to Temple: "Mr. Johnson was in vast good humour, and we had much conversation. I mentioned Fresnoy to him, but he advised me not to follow a plan, and he declared that he himself never followed one above two days. He advised me to read just as inclination prompted me, which alone, he said, would do me any good; for I had better go into company than read a set task. Let us study ever so much, we must still be ignorant of a good deal. Therefore the question is, what parts of science do we want to know? He

it is shown to us at this time, is that of some reverend sage or mentor, and this idea Boswell's description suggests. But Johnson was then only fifty-four. This shows the alteration of current ideas in our day, when the standard of age has been completely lowered. No man is now held to be old until he is past seventy. As he said, "I love the young dogs of this age; they have more wit and conversation than we had."

Setting apart certain follies and a little exuberance, it must be said there is much sense and cleverness, and much to admire, in Boswell's successful entrance into London life. Here was a raw youth from Scotland—shy, unformed, and knowing few, save a dissipated class of his own countrymen. He arrives in 1762, when but twenty-two years old. And we find that, in little more than two months from his introduction to Johnson, he had converted the rather sturdy sage into a friend for life. As we read these conversations, we cannot but be struck by the winning, modest, and entertaining character of his topics—his pleasant suggestions and comments, and do not wonder that he gained upon his hearer.

To his friend Sir D. Dalrymple, Boswell imparted his satisfaction at having made this new acquaintance, and the comfort and profit it brought him. Following what was always an affectionate instinct in his character, he took care to show to Johnson some handsome expressions of praise and compliment which Sir David had

said, too, that idleness was a distemper which I ought to combat against, and that I should prescribe to myself five hours a day, and in these hours gratify whatever literary desires may spring up. He is to give me his advice as to what books I should take with me from England. I told him that the 'Rambler' shall accompany me round Europe, and so be a Rambler indeed: he gave me a smile of complacency."

written, and thus amiably laid the foundation of that warm regard which Johnson always entertained for the later Lord Hailes. To the same friend Boswell wrote, "I thank God that I have got acquainted with Mr. Johnson. He has done me infinite service. He has assisted me to obtain peace of mind; he has assisted me to become a rational Christian. I hope I shall ever remain so. . . . He advises me when abroad to go to places where there is most to be seen and learnt. He is not very fond of the notion of spending a whole winter in a Dutch town. He thinks I may do much more by private study than by attending lectures. He would have me to perambulate (a word in his own style) Spain. He says a man might see a good deal by visiting their inland towns and universities. He also advises me to visit the northern kingdoms, where more that is new is to be seen than in France and Italy, but he is not against my seeing these warmer regions." It is easy to see what Boswell's object was in thus ingeniously repeating this advice to travel, instead of to study.

It is likely that Boswell's religious opinions, which had been much shaken, were brought back to orthodoxy by his conversations with the doctor. Sir David, who seems to have been his true friend, had been disturbed as to his orthodoxy, but the young man was able to reassure him: "My scepticism was not owing to thinking wrong, but to not thinking at all. It is a matter of great moment to keep a sense of religion constantly impressed upon our minds. If that divine guest does not occupy part of the space, vain intruders will; and when once they have got in, it is difficult to get them out again."

During the ten weeks of this agreeable intercourse, the new friends met some sixteen times; and it must

be said that the period thus described is a pleasant one, and abounds in gay conversation, and even wit. Boswell exerted himself much to amuse the doctor, making up parties of his own countrymen and others for his entertainment.*

At last he could no longer protract his departure, and had to seriously prepare for his voyage. But he was sunk in dejection. "I must own to you, my dear friend," he wrote to Temple, "that I feel a good deal of uneasiness at the thought of quitting a place where my affections are centred, for there I enjoy most happiness; however, I am determined to go next week. I hope I shall not be feeble-minded, but pluck up manly resolution, and consider that I am leaving London in order to see the world, store my mind with more ideas, establish a proper character, and then return to the metropolis much happier, and more qualified for a solid relish of its advantages." And again: "I have now fixed to-morrow se'nnight, Friday, the 5th of August, for the day of my departure; and on Saturday, the 6th, I shall be upon the Channel. Alas, my friend! let me disclose my weakness to you. My departure fills me with a kind of gloom that quite overshadows my mind. I could almost weep to think of leaving dear London and the calm retirement of the Inner Temple. I am now launching into the wide world, and am to be long at a distance from my dear Temple, whose kind and amiable counsel

* One of these northerns was a Dr. Ogilvie, who had written an enormous epic, and who boasted of his intimacy with Gray at Cambridge. The poet, however, later assured Temple that he knew no such person. It turned out that Ogilvie had met a Mr. Gray at a Cambridge inn, and had assumed he was the poet, whereas he was only the local apothecary! This good story does not figure in the "Life." ("Letters to Temple," p. 28. Somewhat spitefully he writes, "I humbled poor 'Gilvie finely with telling him of Gray the apothecary.")

never failed to soothe my dejected mind. You may see I am somewhat melancholy; pray comfort me. This is very effeminate and very young, but I cannot help it. My time is fixed, and I will go; I have taken my resolution, and you shall see that I can keep to it. I enclose you a friendly dissertation, which you may read at your leisure; it will show how much stronger my mind was last night only. I am just going to meet Mr. Johnson at the Turk's Head."

This was very natural and affectionate, but the sending "a friendly dissertation" was a curious idea.

The 3rd of August, when he was still in deep dejection, was fixed for his departure. "To-morrow morning, at five o'clock, I set out upon my travels. I have been a great deal with Mr. Johnson of late, and (would you believe it?) his friendship for me is so great that he insists on seeing me sail, and has actually taken a place in the coach to accompany me to Harwich.

"I am quite hurried and confused to-night; however, I shall go with rational and agreeable views of improvement, and hope to return much better than when I went away."

The journey to Harwich is quite dramatic. "On Friday, August 5, we set out early in the morning in the Harwich stage-coach. A fat elderly gentlewoman, and a young Dutchman, seemed the most inclined among us to conversation. At the inn where we dined, the gentlewoman said that she had done her best to educate her children; and, particularly, that she had never suffered them to be a moment idle. JOHNSON. 'I wish, Madam, you would educate me too; for I have been an idle fellow all my life.' 'I am sure, Sir, (said she), you have not been idle.' JOHNSON. 'Nay, Madam, it is very true; and that gentleman there, (pointing to

me,) has been idle. He was idle at Edinburgh. His father sent him to Glasgow, where he continued to be idle. He then came to London, where he has been very idle; and now he is going to Utrecht, where he will be as idle as ever.' I asked him privately how he could expose me so. JOHNSON. 'Poh, poh! (said he) they knew nothing about you, and will think of it no more.' In the afternoon the gentlewoman talked violently against the Roman Catholicks, and of the horrors of the Inquisition. To the utter astonishment of all the passengers but myself, who knew that he could talk upon any side of a question, he defended the Inquisition. . . . Though by no means niggardly, his attention to what was generally right was so minute, that, having observed at one of the stages that I ostentatiously gave a shilling to the coachman, when the custom was for each passenger to give only sixpence, he took me aside and scolded me, saying that what I had done would make the coachman dissatisfied with all the rest of the passengers, who gave him no more than his due. This was a just reprimand."

They stopped for the night at Colchester, a town for which Johnson had a veneration, owing to its having stood a siege for Charles I. Here they had an agreeable supper, with much pleasant talk. "He flattered me with some hopes that he would, in the course of the following summer, come over to Holland, and accompany me in a tour through the Netherlands. I teased him with fanciful apprehensions of unhappiness. A moth having fluttered round the candle, and burnt itself, he laid hold of this little incident to admonish me; saying, with a sly look, and in a solemn but a quiet tone, 'That creature was its own tormentor, and I believe its name was BOSWELL.'

"Next day we got to Harwich, to dinner; and my passage in the packet-boat to Helvoetsluys being secured, and my baggage put on board, we dined at our inn by ourselves.

"We went and looked at the church, and having got into it, and walked up to the altar, Johnson, whose piety was constant and fervent, sent me to my knees, saying, 'Now that you are going to leave your native country, recommend yourself to the protection of your CREATOR and REDEEMER.'"

All this portion of the narrative is picturesque, and even captivating; the style is limpid and unaffected. The closing passage and their farewell show an affectionate heart, as well as artistic feeling. "My reverend friend walked down with me to the beach, where we embraced, and parted with tenderness, and engaged to correspond by letters. I said, 'I hope, Sir, you will not forget me in my absence.' JOHNSON. 'Nay, sir, it is more likely you should forget me than that I should forget you.' As the vessel put out to sea, I kept my eye upon him for a considerable time, while he remained rolling his majestic frame in his usual manner; and at last I perceived him walk back into the town, and he disappeared." All Boswell's letters he kept, and he delivered them back, sealed up in bundles, not long before his death. In these Boswell would have found useful materials for that account of his travels which he at one time meditated; but they appeared to have been destroyed with other papers at his death, by his incurious family. From his great friend, in spite of the assurance that he would not forget him, he seems to have received but two or three letters in all during his long absence.

CHAPTER VI.

TRAVELS ON THE CONTINENT—LETTERS TO WILKES.

1763-4.

Not a few British youths were, at this period, sent to Holland for their education. Wilkes, Charles Townshend, and some others had studied at Leyden some twenty years before. Boswell brought with him a letter of introduction from Sir David Dalrymple to Count Nassau, in which he was described as "a young man of family and merit;" his father introduced him to the celebrated Gronovius of Leyden, whom he had known in the days of his youth; and there were other relations "of the first fashion" who would welcome him cordially to the Hague. His allowance was to be £60 a quarter, which seems handsome enough for a youth at a college.

At Utrecht it seemed likely that the student would justify Johnson's prophecy in the coach, of idleness. It would seem as though the ingenious youth had come to the University to find excuses for travelling. We have only a few notes as to his stay in the Dutch country. In his journal we find various anecdotes, which he set down. "Boswell showed some of his verses to a German professor, who understood English. The professor was highly pleased with them. When he laid them down Boswell said, 'I wrote some of them last night.' 'Ah,' said the professor, 'I did not know they

had been yours, sir, or I should have praised them more.'" Having made an excursion to Leyden, he was permitted to make a lively speech at the expense of a friend. The Hon. Charles Gordon said to him with affected diffidence, in order to receive a compliment, "Mr. Boswell, I would willingly come and see you for a day at Utrecht, but I am afraid I should tire you." "Sir," replied Boswell, "I defy you to tire me for one day."

In the same town, "he put up at the Golden Ball, and was shown into the great parlour, which, as in all the inns in Holland, is a public room. As he was eating a sober bit of supper, there entered three roaring West Indians, followed by a large dog. They made a deal of rude noise. The waiter thought it incumbent upon him to make an apology for their roughness. 'Sir,' said he, 'they are very good-natured gentlemen.' 'Yes, yes,' said Boswell, 'I see they are very good-natured gentlemen, and, in my opinion, sir, the dog seems to be as good-natured as any of the three.'"

He appears to have known Sir Joseph Yorke, the English minister at the Hague, for he describes him as being "so anxious lest people should forget that he was an ambassador, that he held his head as high and spoke as little as possible. As in the infancy of painting it was found necessary to write below a picture, 'This is a cow,' or 'This is a horse,' so from the mouth of Sir Joe cometh a label with these words, 'I am an ambassador.'" This was lively for a young man. But here he made acquaintance with a clever young Dutch lady, Mademoiselle de Zuyl, for whom he conceived a *grande passion*, and, later, was engaged to marry. This young lady seems to have had extraordinary cleverness and smartness in conversation; and

her lover said of her, "She was too vivacious, and crowded her *bon mots* in conversation, so that one had not time to examine them one by one, and see their beauties. He said she used to make people run through the Vatican, where you glance over a number of fine pictures, but have not time to look at and relish any." *

We have other glimpses of the student. At the Hague he found one of his relations, M. Sommelsdyck, who held high office in the republic, and who received him with all the affection of kindred. "As worthy a man as lives," says Boswell. "He has honoured me with his correspondence for twenty years." When leaving this city, he tells us, "Andrew Stuart, Nairne, Colonel Scott, and Boswell went in a coach to Rotterdam. The Dutch coachman was so heavy a blockhead that Andrew Stuart took the reins from him and drove. A mole, somehow or other, was seen upon the road. 'Well,' said Boswell, 'when Mr. Andrew Stuart drove a Dutch coach, he drove so hard that the very moles came above ground to look at him.'"

At Utrecht he was pleased to hear from Mr. Brown, minister of the English Church, some praise of his father, this gentleman declaring that "he was one of the great *beams* that support society." This clergyman's happy image of celestial enjoyment will be

* It was Mademoiselle de Zuyl that told Boswell the capital story, given in "the Life," of the German baron: "j'apprens d'être vif." "A dull German baron had got amongst the English at Geneva, and, being highly pleased with their spirit, wanted to imitate them. One day an Englishman came in to the baron's room, and found him jumping with all his might upon the chairs and down again, so that he was all in a sweat. 'Mon Dieu! Monsieur le baron,' dit-il, 'que faites-vous?' ('Good God! baron,' said he, 'what are you about?') 'Monsieur,' replied the baron, wiping down his temples with a handkerchief, 'j'apprens d'être vif' ('I am learning to be lively')." We may compare this loose version with its later artistic shape.

remembered by readers of Boswell: it made a deep impression on the author himself, and was repeated by him to the sage. He noted also this: "The Dutch bourgeois generally wear coats and wigs of prodigious size, by no means made to fit them; but by way of so much cloth and so much hair, Boswell said, 'Les Hollandois portent des habits et des peruques comme des Hardes.'"

Utrecht is a charming old town, and the traveller takes away with him the most pleasing memories of its noble canal; and the view of the cathedral tower bereft of its nave, the bright red houses and umbrageous streets. Our student, however, soon tired of it; and, almost before he had completed a term, was, as we shall see, travelling about the country. His father had designed that he should spend two years of study at the University. He must have been confounded to learn that his son was touring it over Europe. "A pity," as Johnson was to say of him later, "Boswell has not better bottom."

We find him presently at Berlin, where he was entertained by his countryman, Sir Andrew Mitchell. From Berlin he wrote to his father, announcing his plans for an extended tour, and begging for funds to enable him to visit Switzerland and Italy. Until an answer arrived, he amused himself by an excursion to Hanover and Brunswick. On his return, at the end of August, he found a severe letter, refusing the sanction and requiring his return to Utrecht. A short visit to Paris only would be allowed. He then wrote to the ambassador, who was away at Spa, to ask his intercession; and a most characteristic appeal it is.

"Your departure is a good deal unlucky for me, not only as it deprives me of conversation which gave

me uncommon pleasure, and invariably accustomed me to rational thinking and honourable sentiment, but because I now particularly stand in need of your prudent and kind counsel with respect to my travels. I have had another letter from my father, in which he continues of opinion that travelling is of very little use, and may do a great deal of harm. I shall not repeat what I have formerly said of my father's particular character; I say *particular*, for rarely will you find a man of so excellent a frame of body, and so noble a mind as to have passed through life with uniform propriety of conduct. For my own part, I own that I am not such a favourite of nature. Think not that I intend *to plead machinery*, and escape from the censure due to the faults which I have committed. I only would have you consider that judgment is a natural gift as well as imagination, and force of mind is in a great measure independent of our endeavours: think of me as I am, and pronounce accordingly.

"I esteem and love my father, and I am determined to do what is in my power to make him easy and happy; but you will allow that I may endeavour to make him happy and at the same time not be too hard upon myself. I must use you so much with the freedom of a friend as to tell you that, with the vivacity which you allowed me, I have a melancholy disposition. To escape from the gloom of dark speculation, I have made excursions into the fields of amusement, perhaps of folly. I have found that amusement and folly are beneath me, and that without some laudable pursuit my life must be insipid and wearisome. I therefore took the resolution of leaving London, and settled myself for the winter at Utrecht, where I recovered my inclination for study and rational thinking. I then laid my account with travel-

ling for a couple of years, but I found my father's views to be entirely different. You saw the letter which I wrote him from this, and I flatter myself that you approved of it. I cannot expect his answer for some weeks; in the meantime he tells me that he would not oppose my passing another winter at Utrecht, so that he does not grudge the time which I ask. As for the money, I should think for one year a little extraordinary expense is not thrown away, when it is also to be considered that what I spend now I shall not have some years hence. My father seems much against my going to Italy, but gives me leave to go from there and pass some months in Paris. I own that the words of the apostle Paul, 'I must see Rome,' are strongly borne in upon my mind; it would give me infinite pleasure; it would give me talk for a lifetime, and I should go home to Auchinleck with serene contentment. I am no libertine, and have a moral certainty of suffering no harm in Italy; I can also assure you that I shall be as moderate as possible in my expenses. I do not intend to travel as *Mi Lord Anglois*, but merely as a scholar and a man of elegant curiosity, and I am told that in that character I may live in Italy very reasonably. I obviate your objection of my being obliged to live like others, by assuring you that I have none of that second-rate ambition which actuates most young men of fortune upon their travels. After passing four months on classic ground, I would come through France, and go home, as I said to my father, *uti conviva satur*.

"Now, sir, tell me fairly if I am unreasonable. Upon my honour, I cannot think that I am. I give you word that my father's inclinations shall be as inviolable laws to his son; but don't you think that I may just remonstrate before I consider an act as passed? Don't

you think that, rather than go home contrary to what I much desire, and cannot help thinking very proper,—don't you think it worth while to humour me so far as to allow me my year and a reasonable sum, after which I return clear and contented, without any pretence for my stormy disposition to murmur at? I would beg, sir, that you would write to my father your opinion as to this matter, and put it in the light you think it deserves. In the meantime I can see little advantage to be had at Berlin. I shall, however, remain here a fortnight, after which I intend passing by Mannheim, and one or two more of the German Courts, to Geneva; I am then at the point from which I may either steer to Italy or to France. I shall see Voltaire. I shall also see Switzerland and Rousseau; these two men are to me greater objects than most statues or pictures. I take this opportunity to assure the loved and respected friend of my father that I am serenely happy at having obtained his acquaintance. I would hope that I shall not be found unworthy of his regard, and I wish very honestly for an opportunity of showing my real esteem for such a character as I could draw to any one else but to himself."

His father, perhaps because he found it useless to resist, gave consent to the Italian tour; on which the young man wrote rather pertly in answer to wholesome advice sent him by the ambassador: "I forgive you this, for I say just the same to young people when I advise. To enter into detail of the little circumstances which compose the felicity of another, is what a man of any genius can hardly submit to. We therefore give a good, wholesome, general counsel; and he who consults us thinks a little, and then endeavours to take his own way as well as he can. I have, how-

ever, the happiness to inform you that my father has consented that I shall go to Italy. Upon my soul, I am grateful to the most worthy of men: it will be hard if we are not well together, for I love him with the strongest affection. If I find that I cannot succeed in my own plans in such a way as to convince my father that I am in the right, I shall do my utmost to fulfil the plan, beyond which he cannot think to look. You may suppose what my ideas are, for they are of your old acquaintances. One thing I am sure of, and by the undisguised honour of a man of probity I swear, shall chiefly influence me—a regard to the happiness of him to whom I owe so much. *Believe me I have a soul.*" Then, asking his interest for Temple's brother—he was writing from Geneva on Christmas Day, 1764—he addresses Mr. Mitchell in this odd style: "You are the only man in Britain, *except my Sovereign*, whom I would ask a favour of. I have written to Lady Northumberland; but I confess I have little confidence in her. . . . If you can aid me, you will most truly oblige a worthy fellow; *for such I am.* I know you to be a man of the most perfect honour," etc.

He accordingly set off on his "grand tour," and travelled in company with his "honoured friend," Earl Marischal, an exiled Jacobite, then in service of the King of Prussia. On arriving at a famous German town, the traveller was seized with a fit of enthusiasm, and wrote a rather hysterical letter to his great friend at home.

"*To Mr. Samuel Johnson.*

"My ever dear and much-respected Sir,—You know my solemn enthusiasm of mind. You love me for it, and I respect myself for it, because in so far I

resemble Mr. Johnson. You will be agreeably surprised, when you learn the reason of my writing this letter. I am at Wittemberg in Saxony. I am in the old church where the Reformation was first preached, and where some of the reformers lie interred. I cannot resist the serious pleasure of writing to Mr. Johnson from the tomb of Melancthon. My paper rests upon the grave-stone of that great and good man, who was undoubtedly the worthiest of all the reformers. He wished to reform abuses which had been introduced into the Church; but had no private resentment to gratify. So mild was he, that when his aged mother consulted him with anxiety on the perplexing disputes of the times, he advised her 'to keep to the old religion.' At this tomb, then, my ever dear and respected friend! I vow to thee an eternal attachment. It shall be my study to do what I can to render your life happy: and if you die before me, I shall endeavour to do honour to your memory; and, elevated by the remembrance of you, persist in noble piety. May GOD, the father of all beings, ever bless you! and may you continue to love—Your most affectionate friend, and devoted servant, JAMES BOSWELL.

"Sunday, Sept. 30, 1764."

On his travels he showed a pleasant liveliness, and wit even, that must have recommended him very agreeably to his hosts. Some of his speeches are piquant enough. Thus, "at the court of Saxe-Gotha there were two ladies of honour, Mesdemoiselles de Rickslepen, sisters, very pretty, but very little. Boswell said to a baron of the court, 'Monsieur, il faut les prendre comme des alouettes, par la demi-douzaine.'" And again, "at Charlottenburg, while the entertainments were there on account of the betrothing of the Princess

Elizabeth of Brunswick to the Prince of Prussia; all the ladies and gentlemen pressed eagerly to get places at the windows of the palace, in order to see the royal families at supper. Boswell found this a little ridiculous, so came up to his acquaintances and said, 'Allons, allons, je vous en prie voyons la seconde table; je vous assure il vaut mieux la peine; ces gens mangent plus que les autres?'" In Italy, when he saw the extreme profligacy of the ladies, he said, "Italy has been called the garden of Europe, I think it is the *Covent Garden.*"

When he visited Baden he seems, as he contrived everywhere, to have got into the best company, for he reports a lively speech of the "grand maître" of a margrave. "Les autres princes," said this official of another margrave, "s'amuse des amusements; mais ce prince s'amuse des affaires." He seems indeed to have recommended himself everywhere by his agreeable manner and good spirits.

He waited on Voltaire at Ferney, and in his conversation appears to have acquitted himself judiciously enough; and there was adroitness in the fashion he introduced one topic. Johnson had spoken with contempt of the King of Prussia's literary performances: "His prose is poor stuff. He writes just as you may suppose Voltaire's footboy to do, who has been his amanuensis" — a speech which he repeated, good-naturedly, to reconcile him somewhat to Johnson, whom he, in affecting the English mode of expression, had previously characterized as "a superstitious dog." But after hearing such a criticism on Frederick the Great, with whom he was then on bad terms, he exclaimed, "An honest fellow!" This supplies us with a fair specimen of one of Boswell's little arts for in-

gratiating himself with others. He also told him of his plans: how he intended visiting Rousseau, whom Voltaire contemptuously spoke of as "ce garçon." He announced to him that he and his great friend intended making an excursion to the Hebrides, on which the philosopher said, "You do not require me to go with you?" to which the young man replied in the negative. "Then I am very well content that you should go." Boswell did not perceive the sarcastic tone of this speech, which seemed to imply that these trivial plans had no concern with *him*.

CHAPTER VII.

INTIMACY WITH WILKES.

1765.

WHEN our traveller arrived at Naples, he became exceedingly intimate with a personage whose proceedings were attracting the attention of Europe—the celebrated Mr. Wilkes. This extraordinary man had been expelled from Parliament, outlawed, put under a ban, and was even more notorious as having printed the most shameless and shameful book ever written by an Englishman. The thoughtless Boswell met this profligate in Rome, no doubt owing his introduction to Churchill, and seems to have entered into strict alliance with him. At the same time, it was difficult to resist the attraction of Wilkes's good nature, perpetual good humour, and *gaieté de cœur*. Boswell's strange freedom and awkward candour he put up with; and through his whole life he seems to have retained a genuine regard for his volatile admirer.

At Rome, too, Mr. Boswell made his way with his usual success, though, as usual, he encountered some rude rebuffs. Mr. Lumisden, his countryman, made a smart speech at his expense. "Boswell had a travelling box in which he carried his hats and his papers. He was saying one day, 'What connection, now, have they together?' Replied Mr. Lumisden, 'They have both a connection with your head.'"

When Wilkes left, Boswell entered on a correspondence with him, which he continued in his own free, amusing fashion, exhibiting his changes of humour and impulsiveness in a very natural way. Sometimes, as it will be seen later, he was so carried away by his ardour as to speak bluntly, and even coarsely, of his friend's political opinions. When no answer reached him—for Wilkes was notoriously careless in answering letters—Boswell would take the alarm, and become rather abject in his apologies. At other times he had a knack of making awkward allusions to painful passages in Wilkes's career. But the equanimity of Wilkes was always unruffled.*

As Boswell's letters to him have never been published, they are here given at length, and I am sure will be found an entertainment by the reader.

Of their intimacy at Naples, the only record is a few little hastily scribbled scraps, which show that the young man was eager to convert his friend. "Will you allow me to come down to you a moment, Hero of Liberty? Cromwell became a tyrant: are you becoming a Grand Sultan?" And again: ". . . Might we not have an interview, and continue the conversation on the immateriality of the soul which you had with my countryman Baxter, many years ago, at Brussels?

* It will be shown further on, how Boswell, without intending malice, could not resist a good stroke at the expense of his friend. He once uttered an admirable *mot*, for which we may be inclined to address him as Johnson did another: "Say no more, sir; rest your reputation on this." The conversation had been about Wilkes and his *ugliness*, and his being a notorious infidel: "Boswell said he was partial as to *one* article: for he had too much interest to deny the resurrection of the body." Very profane, but still witty, was Wilkes's speech on this subject: "For my own share, I would no more value being raised with the same body, than being raised in the same coat, waistcoat, and breeches" ("Boswelliana").

To men of philosophical minds there are surely moments in which they set aside their nation. John Wilkes, the Whig world despises this sentiment; John Wilkes, the gay profligate, would laugh at it; but John Wilkes, the philosopher, will feel it, and will love it."

"You have no objection to sitting up a little late. Perhaps you may come to me to-night. I hope, at any rate, you will come with me to-morrow. I have two favours to beg of you: one that your letters may be signed 'John Wilkes;' and the other, that they may be sealed in such a manner that I may not tear a word on opening them. My address is now '*Locanda di Carlo, Firenze.*' Write soon."

When he arrived at Rome, we find an entertaining series of letters from Boswell to his friend, which I shall now place before the reader.

Mr. Boswell to Wilkes.

"Rome, April 22, 1765.

"DEAR SIR,—The many pleasant hours which we past together at Naples shall never be lost. The remembrance of them shall inspirit this gloomy mind while I live. Even your compliments were excellent, and had full effect. You told me I was the most liberal man you had ever met with, a citizen of the world, free from the prejudices of any country, who would be liked in France as much as in Britain. You called me 'my Old Lord of Scotland,' and you said I looked as if I had a thousand men at my back. Had it been your chiefest interest to make Boswell satisfied with himself, you could not have done it better. But I set a higher value on your parting words, which you pronounced with such a tone that I almost believed you. I shall never forget

your civility to me. You are engraven in my heart. Was you really in earnest?

"I wish much to hear how you live now you are got into the stately Castle, which we surveyed with so great attention. Yours is, indeed, a *nobile exilium.* I am afraid the punishment which you suffer for your evil deeds will hardly deter others from doing the like. You may think as you please, but I have no small pride in being able to write to you with this gay good humour, for I do in my conscience believe you to be an enemy to the true old British Constitution, and to the order and happiness of society.

"That is to say, I believe you to be a very Whig and a very libertine. But philosophy can analyze human nature, and from every man of parts can extract a certain quantity of good. Dare I affirm that I have found cheerfulness, knowledge, wit, and generosity, even in Mr. Wilkes? I suppose few crucibles are so happily constructed as mine, and I imagine that I have a particular talent for finding the gold in Honour's composition. Certain it is that the process must be performed very delicately. Some days ago nothing would serve me but to write to you an Heroic Epistle; and thus I began—

> "To thee, Gay Wilkes, tho' still as gay
> As when Dan Armstrong wrote his 'German Day,'
> Another Scot now sends his English Whig,
> Spite of the Whiggish broils which mark our times,
> Spite of the rude North Briton's factious rage,
> And all th' abuse of thy impaling page.

"*In magnis voluisse sat est.* In the Italian Gazettes they have thought proper to give you the epithet of *Il Bruto Inglese.* Bruto, in Italian, may signify either 'Brutus' or 'ugly,' and you must know it is disputed between your friends and your enemies whether the

epithet ought to be translated 'the English Brutus' or 'the Ugly Englishman.' Much may be said on both sides. Let Mademoiselle Corradini determine.

"You are no doubt very busy preparing your expected works at your hours of leisure. I hope you think of your friends, alive and dead. Of the first, it is difficult to know which are which. Of the last, I only know two. Methinks I see Churchill bouncing into the regions below, making even Cerberus dread his brawny force, while poor Lloyd is lounging on the fatal shore for want of a halfpenny to pay his freight. He would not want it long could he who relieved him from the fleet know where to find him. I have received from our friend Needham some philosophical remarks which he desires may be communicated to you. I enclose his letter, but beg you may return it me.—I am, dear Sir, as much yours as a Scots Royalist can be, JAMES BOSWELL.

"Pray write me at Caffé Inglese. I leave this soon."

To the Same.

"Rome, May 17, 1765.

"DEAR SIR,—My rogue, or a *Valet de Place*, has been the occasion of your not hearing from me three days sooner. He told me on Friday that the Naples post did not go out till Saturday; and on Saturday I learnt that it goes out on Tuesdays and Fridays. Were it not that the fellow has a numerous family, I would turn him off.

"I embrace you as a regular correspondent; and though a certain weekly political tract has rendered you, as it were, hackneyed in punctuality, I doubt not to be as punctual as you. You have advised me to think of being a Foreign Minister. You shall judge how I can be exact in my despatches.

"I am not displeased to find you can be melancholy. The loss of Churchill is no doubt the severest affliction that you could meet with. Pray let me be serious, and advise you to seek consolation from the immortality of the soul which your departed friend strongly defends in his 'Duellist.' The arguments for that noble system which indicates the Divine justice are surely strong, and it depends on ourselves to cultivate elevating hope. It was the prospect of meeting the renowned and the worthy of former ages that made Cicero say, 'Si in hoc erro, libertus erro.' I heartily wish that John Wilkes, who has his mind so well furnished with classical ideas, had this one in daily remembrance.

"I am obliged to you for the title page to your History. The first motto is excellent for a furious Whig, and the second inimitably adapted to the years of our Sovereign's reign. I doubt not but you will make more noise with the four first years of King George the Third than Dean Swift has done with the four last years of Queen Anne.

"As to your evil deeds which I mentioned in my last, I beg you may not refute the charge. Without entering into any long discussion, it is certain that you did all in your power to stir up jealousy and hatred between the southern and northern inhabitants of Britain, and that you treated with indecent irony our worthy Monarch, for which I say you deserve to be *beaten with many stripes.* You are now, it is true, connected with the great cause of general warrants. But for this you have reason to thank the blundering head of a statesman, and cannot claim any real merit from it; for to be taken up without a name was surely no part of your plan.

"Since you praise the lines which I sent you, and

wish I would go on with the poem, I shall endeavour to do so; but I can tell you, when my virtuous Tory soul grows warm, it will not be much to your credit.

"In the course of our correspondence, you shall have the various schemes which I form for getting tolerably through this strange existence. If you would think justly of me, you must ever remember that I have a melancholy mind. That is the great principle in my composition. Farewell.—JAMES BOSWELL."

To the Same.

"Terni, June 15, 1765.

"DEAR SIR,—You was polite enough to say that I might have you for a regular correspondent, and I very gladly accepted of your offer. I wrote to you several weeks ago, and have not yet had an answer. Am I to impute your silence to the dejection of a forlorn swain, whom the cruel Corradini has left to weep in solitude; or have you taken amiss the strong terms in which I declared my disapprobation of your conduct? As to the first, I suppose it is now pretty much over. And as to the second, you know I always talked the same language, I glory in being an enthusiast for my King, for my religion, and I scorn the least appearance of dissimulation. As the gay John Wilkes, you are most pleasing to me, and I shall be glad to hear from you often. Let serious matters be out of the question, and you and I can perfectly agree.

"I have formed a great intimacy with my Lord Mountstuart, who has insisted with me to accompany him in the rest of his tour of Italy. He is an amiable young nobleman, and, I can tell you, wants not the spirit of his ancient family. You see me, then, in my element. My liberal disposition will ever remain,

should I even live in the heart of a Court. Gay Wilkes, adieu. My address is 'Chez M. Jean Watson, á Venize.' —JAMES BOSWELL."

To the Same.

"July 13, 1765.

"DEAR SIR,—I shall certainly go to-morrow morning. I have a favour to ask of you. Pray come to me between eight and nine, and let us pass this evening together. Perhaps it may be our last. I don't like to think so. Order your supper. I shall value highly some years hence the hours which we have enjoyed at Naples. Your Addison shall not be *lifted*. Pray don't refuse me, for I wish much to take leave of you on friendly terms. You say you have two or three souls. May that which I have found so congenial to mine live for ever, while the spirit of the Whig goeth downwards.

"He is to meet me at Florence, and there I promise myself a singular pleasure in the perusal of a production whose rarity alone might entitle it to a place in the British Museum. You are seldom in a solemn humour. But you must be so sometimes, for without being in all humours it is impossible to know human nature. Would I had one half of your good humour, which is free at all hours, and cannot be hurt either by outlawry or by the loss of a mistress. I do admire your strength of mind, and look upon you as one of the vigorous few who keep up the true manly character in this effeminate age. With what a philosophical patience do you bear the flight of your beautiful Bolognese! Yet I can suppose you sometimes plaintive, and sometimes a little angry. If one may joke upon an old theme, I would ask if you have never exclaimed with the mountain swain, 'Nec sum adeo informis, etc.' I am sorry

that Corradini and you have differed, and I shall not be displeased to hear that you have made it up again. There was an idle report that she had robbed you. I cannot believe it, and if you think as I do, you will surely be generous enough to contradict it. After all, marriage is the real state of happiness. *Funeste et amplius*, etc., can apply to nothing else. What we lawyers call the *consortium communis vitæ* is the most comfortable of all ideas, and I hope I shall one day tell you so from experience. I mean not to triumph over you. Marriage is an excellent fruit when ripe. You have been unlucky enough to eat it green. Your works must advance very fast. You will like Lausanne much, as the society there is very easy and agreeable. At Geneva you will be very well received: The malcontents will flock around you, and borrow some of that fire which has blazed with such violence. As far as I can judge, the Geneva opposition is better founded than that in a certain great Kingdom. I own to you I love to see these Republicans at variance among themselves. This, I fear, you will call a plume from the wing of Johnson. It may be so. My veneration and love for that illustrious philosopher are so great that I cannot promise to be always free from some imitation of him. Could my feeble mind but preserve a faint impression of Dr. Johnson, it would be a glory to myself and a benefit to mankind. O! John Wilkes! Thou gay, learned, and ingenious private gentleman, thou passionate politician, thou thoughtless infidel, good without principle and wicked without malevolence, let Johnson teach thee the road to natural virtue and noble felicity! I have not made two verses this last two months. I have the most inconstant mind in the world. At times I can hardly help becoming a man of

considerable parts, but at other times I insensibly fall into a state little better than that of a blockhead. You have praised the beginning of my epistle to you, and, I think, with justice. I am afraid to go on with it for fear of the 'fumum et fulgur.' However, if you insist upon it, I shall run all *risques* to entertain you with the completeness of my small design. I continue to like Lord Mountstuart; my intimacy with him has brought me acquainted with the character of Lord Bute, whom I shall ever admire. His letters to his son prove him to be a man of the most generous soul and most tender heart. I am sure he is one of the best friends and best fathers that ever lived. As a statesman I am sure his intentions were grand and honourable. What his administration has been, upon my honour I have not yet knowledge enough, nor ability enough, to judge. He writes with an eloquence which would charm you. Since you are willing enough to bear my honest freedom, our correspondence shall be as frequent as you please. Let us correspond, not as politicians, but as men of wit and humour, and let us mingle as much politics in our letters as politicians do with humour in theirs. Adieu, dear Sir.—JAMES BOSWELL."

We find among these papers some lines, no doubt, the poetical effusion referred to in the letters. They have but little merit—it will be noted that the lines have often to be eked out with superfluous words,—and it may have been Wilkes's good nature that prompted his warm praise.

"*FOR THE NOTED WILKES.*

"SPECIMEN OF PARLIAMENT: A POEM.

"SEE both incited by the same desire
The Laird in Scotland, and the English Squire.
Her sway Ambition spreads from south to north,
On banks of Severn, and on banks of Forth.
To serve my country half my lands I'd give:
Not to be Member, friends, is not to live.
Who at his Seat contentedly would stay?
Who would not be in great Preferment's way?
Who'd grudge the money at elections spent?
A place is not too dear at ten per cent.

"Let Banker Gascoigne a whole ox propose,
And 'mongst the poor its roasted quarters share;
Let little *Gairlies* make his voters swim
In tubs of ale, till judgment's eyes grow dim.
And an attorney, versed in nice chicane,
Might for Tom Thumb the maudlin borough gain.
Let other Members purchase other votes,
Some give false promise, some false notes.
By merit only let my Dempster stand,
And still be numbered with the chosen band.

"Some in the House must be exceeding young,
And find a seat ere they have found a tongue,
Like Whistling Tommy, an untoward prig,
With hips yet sore from Eton's smarting twig,
His hands hard rubbing, pinking with his eyes,
And with both shoulders struggling to be wise.
Are cheesecakes gratis * to the member brought,
'And—and—and' † may they whip me for a fault?
Gods! is Great Britain grown a school,
Each bench a form, each Act a grammar school?

"Why did my Dempster beat his patriot breast,
Lest Scottish judges one week more should rest?
Why the high-horse of Independence ride,
And cry, 'Divide the House! I say, Divide!'"

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* *Gratis*, for he is a narrow dog.

† "And—and—and"—for he stutters.

Such is this interesting series of natural, outspoken communications, which gives a good idea of Boswell's kindly heart. We could, however, have wished that he had chosen a better confidant.

During his stay at Rome, which seems to have been a delightful time for him, he made acquaintance with Lord Mountstuart, the eldest son of Lord Bute, a young man of much promise and cleverness, who was then making the "grand tour," "bear-led," by Professor Mallet. Dutens, the "voyageur qui se repose," describes his "easy and gentle manners: he was susceptible of friendship, and sparing no pains to oblige those he loved." It was natural, therefore, that Boswell should have clung to a person of so useful a disposition. He constituted him his patron and Mæcenas, and calculated on his protection; but only to be beguiled, as he was in so many cases. This friend might have assisted him; for he filled many high posts, and became ambassador to Spain later.

The young nobleman found so much attraction in his company, that he was eager to have him as a travelling companion. With this view he wrote a warm and pressing letter to Mr. Mure, of Caldwell, asking him to obtain Lord Auchinleck's permission.

Lord Mountstuart to Mr. Mure.

"Rome, June 5, 1765.

"DEAR MURE,—Though four years and a half may have obliterated many things in the mind of a young man, yet they have not made me forget that I have a true friend in you, and that you would do everything in your power to serve me. To be very open with you, though I promised to write sometimes, my indolence and aversion to it would always have hindered me had not

an occasion presented itself of asking the following favour of you. Having got acquainted with Mr. Boswell here at Rome, our acquaintance soon grew into a strong intimacy, so much so that I have desired him to go on with me in my tour through Italy as long as it would be agreeable to him. He liked the scheme much, as well as Colonel Edmonstone; but says he is so pressed by his father to go home, that he durst not take such a step without his leave; but that you, being a great friend of my Lord's, might easily obtain permission.

"Boswell is an excellent lad, full of spirit and noble sentiments, and (as the world goes) it ought to be reckoned a fortunate thing for him going with me, and, indeed, fortunate for myself, as he goes on in the same studies that I do, and, if possible, rouses one up, whether I will or no. He, too, has the advantage of being in company with one of the cleverest men in Europe, Mr. Mallet, the professor who attends me. Now, my dear Mure, I hope you will tell all this to his father; also that his cousin, the Colonel, wishes it much. You may tell him, too, that I am not so wild a man as I am generally supposed to be."

What result was produced by this warm and pressing letter, is not known; but it would appear that the permission was withheld. He had now more ambitious plans in view, and was filled with the romantic ideal of Paoli, the deliverer of Corsica. He resolved to make his way to the island, and attach himself to the hero. For a young man, panting to be known and talked of, this was no bad advertisement. It is remarkable with what success and adroitness he carried out his plan. He always took particular pains to advertise his proceedings in the newspapers, through the agency of short

paragraphs, which were written by himself, though taking the form of an independent communication. Through his life he maintained a connection with newspapers and magazines, such as *The Scots Magazine*, *The London*, and the *London Chronicle*. His style can be recognized without difficulty. He took care to send home special accounts, which conveyed the idea that his progress was exciting mysterious wonder and speculation.

"*Rome, December* 5, 1766.—I can, however, inform you for certain that a British subject has been there (in Corsica). About the middle of October Mr. Boswell, a Scots gentleman, upon his travels over Europe, sailed from the port of Leghorn for the island of Corsiça with a very ample and particular passport from Commodore Harrison. He landed on Cape Corso, and went about a hundred miles into the territories of the malcontents, as they were formerly called, but must now have the title of the nation. He found Signor de Paoli in one of the provinces on the other side of the great range of hills. He no doubt presented to the chief very sufficient recommendations, for he was received by him with every mark of distinction, was lodged in a palace of the noble family of Colonna, and, whenever he chose to make a little tour, was attended by a detachment of guards. He passed ten or twelve days with General de Paoli, dined and supped with him constantly, and was every day in private conference with him for some hours. Mr. Boswell gave out at Leghorn that he went to Corsica merely for curiosity, but the politicians of Italy think they can see more important reasons for his visiting the island. *The Genoese have been not a little alarmed by it:* having received very early intimation of Mr. Boswell's having sailed from Leghorn, they procured

constant intelligence of his motions during the whole time of his stay in the island; but all the intelligence sent them only served to throw them into greater perplexity. What appears most difficult to be explained is Mr. Boswell's having sailed almost before anybody knew of his intention. He carried all the appearance of a gentleman travelling for his amusement, passed some time with the Count de Marbœuf, commander-in-chief of the French troops in Corsica, and afterwards went to Genoa, where he stayed about a week, and seemed free and unconcerned as if he had nothing to do with state disputes. People in this part of the world are curious to know what will really be the consequence of Mr. Boswell's tour in Corsica."

And again, in another chronicle: "*London, January* 11.—When Mr. Boswell was presented to the General de Paoli, he paid this compliment to the Corsicans: 'Sir, I am upon my travels, and have lately visited Rome. I am come from seeing the ruins of one brave and free people; I now see the rise of another.'" *

* In his little *Memoir*, also, he thus rather boastfully extols his courage:—

"But Mr. Boswell's travels were principally marked by his visiting the island of Corsica, the internal part of which no native of Britain had ever seen. Undismayed by the reports of danger which were circulated, he penetrated into its wildest districts, and was amply rewarded by the knowledge which he acquired, and by obtaining the acquaintance of its illustrious Chief, General Paoli. Miss Aitken, now Mrs. Barbauld, has thus described Mr. Boswell's singular happiness, in her beautiful poem, entitled, 'CORSICA.' After descanting on the blessings of liberty, she proceeds—

"'Such were the working thoughts which swell'd the breast
Of generous BOSWELL, when with nobler aim
And views beyond the narrow beaten track
By trivial fancy trode, he turn'd his course
From polish'd Gallia's soft delicious vales,
From the grey reliques of imperial Rome,
From her long galleries of laurel'd stone,

This, in his own phrase, was "keeping it warm."

> Her chisel'd heroes and her marble Gods
> (Whose dumb majestic pomp yet awes the world),
> To animated forms of patriot zeal;
> Warm in the living majesty of virtue;
> Elate with fearless spirit; firm; resolv'd;
> By fortune unsubdued; unaw'd by power.'

"On the same account he was celebrated by the late Edward Burnaby Green, Esq., in 'Corsica, an Ode;' and by Capel Lofft, Esq., in his 'Praises of Poetry.'"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TOUR IN CORSICA.

1765.

MANY have, no doubt, wondered what could have brought our Utrecht student into connection with the little island of Corsica. At this distance of time "the brave Paoli" and Corsica Boswell seem quite in harmony; but he very frankly tells us that he "wished for something more than just the common course of what is called the 'tour of Europe,' and Corsica occurred to me as a place which nobody else had seen."

During a portion of his German travels, he had accompanied Lord Marischal, an old Jacobite, who was governor of Neuchâtel. As this place was only a few leagues from Mortier, where Rousseau was living, it was natural that the earl should give his friend a letter to the philosopher. Lord Marischal, in his curious letter, described Boswell as having an excellent disposition, though full of visionary ideas, as having seen spirits, etc. "I only hope he will not fall into the hands of people who will turn his head." * This odd recommendation was hardly likely to impress Rousseau. He, however, welcomed Boswell courteously; the young man, having told him his scheme, insisted that he should

* "Strekeisen," ii.

give him a letter of introduction to Paoli, when he returned from his visit to Rome. "The wild philosopher," as Boswell calls him, promised to do so.

The expedition required an amount of enterprise and energy which we could scarcely have expected in one of his disposition. The result, as it turned out, was perfectly successful; secured him the prestige which he was so longing for; and launched him with *éclat* in London society.

From Rome he wrote to Rousseau, reminding him of his promise, adding that, if he refused him, he "should certainly go without it, and be probably hanged for a spy." In May he received a reply, in which the philosopher carelessly put the request aside with some compliments, telling him that it would be enough to show his letter to the general, and that he needed no recommendation but his own merits. He gave him the name of a gentleman at Bastia, to whom he was also to show the letter.

It would appear that there was some reason for this guarded recommendation; for Rousseau, though receiving emissaries from Buttafuoco, for whom this letter was intended, was favouring an intrigue by which the island was to be handed over to the French. His visitor, at that time well inclined to make him a hero, later joined in the general *charivari* against him. "When he was at a distance," he wrote, "his singular eloquence filled our minds with high ideas of the wild philosopher. When he came into the walks of men, we know, alas! how those ideas suffered."

We must admire the pleasant good spirits and vivacity with which the young man undertook his expedition. The account he gave of his travels is a most agreeable one, remarkable for its unaffected

candour and graphic power. Every reader must be attracted by it, as it is highly dramatic, from the revelation of his own thoughts and feelings, expressed in the most natural way. All this was novel at the time, and contrasted with the formal and pedantic style of the ordinary book of travels.

At Sienna he had warning of the dangers of the expedition, but was furnished by Count Rivarola with letters and much good advice: and he received a passport from "Commodore Harrison of the British Navy." He embarked on board an Italian vessel bound for Cape Corso, and, after two days' sailing, landed. He was "passed on" to various hospitable persons, and entertained at their houses. The excitable traveller, fancying he was at an inn, would sometimes call loudly for various things, and was good-humouredly rebuked by one of his hosts: "One thing after another, sir!" He at last arrived at Corte, whence he was to set out, over the hills, for Paoli's quarters at Solacaro, where he was received by the general in an odd and suspicious way. As he presented his letters of introduction, the general shaded his countenance carefully. "For ten minutes he walked backwards and forwards through the room, hardly saying a word, while he looked at me with a steadfast, keen, and persevering eye, as if he searched my very soul." No wonder he found the interview for a while "very severe upon him." This restraint, however, later passed off; and he was invited to dine, and entertained handsomely.

The traveller, while giving his account of his reception and of the fashion in which he impressed the general, scarcely dreamed of how he had really affected the latter. Long after, when in England, Paoli entertained a party at Streatham with a rather ludicrous

account of his "fussy" and importunate guest. "He came to my country sudden, and he fetched me some letters of recommending him. But I was of the belief he might, in the verity, be no other person but one impostor. And I supposed, in my *mente*, he was in the privacy one *espy;* for I look away from him to my other companies, and, in one moment, when I look back to him, I behold it in his hands his tablet, and one pencil! O, he was at the work, I give it you my honour, of writing down all what I say to some persons whatsoever in the room! Indeed I was angry enough. Pretty much so, I give it you my word. But soon after, I discern he was no impostor, and besides, no espy; for soon I find it out I was myself only the monster he came to observe, and to describe with one pencil in his tablet! O, is a very good man, Mr. Boswell, in the bottom! so cheerful, so witty, so gentle, so talkable. But, at the first, O, I was indeed *faché* of the sufficient. I was in one passion, in my mente, very well." The truth was, that, in spite of all Mr. Boswell's disclaimers, he was believed to have a mission from England, and was treated accordingly. His chocolate was served on a silver salver bearing the Corsican arms. The nobles waited on him, and, when he chose to make a little tour, he was attended in state by a party of guards. On one day, when he was mounted on Paoli's own horse, richly caparisoned with gold, "I allowed myself," he says, "to indulge a momentary pride in this parade, as I was anxious to experience what could really be the pleasure of state and distinction," and when he returned to the mainland he could tell his friends that "he would not bear to live with them, as they did not treat him with a proper respect." All the time, he enjoyed "a sort of luxury of noble sentiments." He

was also keeping a journal, in which he set down his host's remarks. The general gave him much good advice on the subject of moral conduct. This, joined with the fact that he received a warning not to be too attentive to the ladies of the country, seems to show that the traveller had been exhibiting his customary weakness. Paoli especially enjoined him to marry, and hoped to have a letter from him, on his return, announcing this happy event. From this high favour, the worthy natives were more and more convinced that he had a mission, and styled him "the English Ambassador." He became a great favourite with them. "I got a Corsican dress made, in which I walked about with an air of true satisfaction." In this very costume he figured at the Stratford Jubilee. The general made him a present of his own handsome pistols. "I had every other accoutrement. I even got one of the shells which had often sounded the alarm to liberty." So transported and excited became our traveller, that he gave way to more than his usual extravagance. They wished him to give them an air on the German flute. "To have told them, 'Really, gentlemen, I play very ill,' and to put on such airs as we do in our grand companies, would have been highly ridiculous. I therefore immediately complied with their request. I gave them one or two Italian, and then some of our beautiful old Scotch tunes, '*Cornriggs are bonnie*,' '*Gilderoy*.' The Corsicans were charmed with the specimens I gave them, though I might now say, that they were very indifferently performed. My good friends insisted also to have an English song from me. I endeavoured to please them in this too. I sang them 'Hearts of Oak.' I translated it into Italian for them, and never did I see men so delighted with a song as the Corsicans were

with 'Hearts of Oak.' '*Cuore di querco!*' cried they. '*Bravo Inglese!*' It was quite a joyous riot. I fancied myself to be a recruiting officer. I fancied all my chorus of Corsicans aboard the English fleet." This is all comic enough, especially the idea of his being saluted as "heart of oak," but is natural and ingenuous too.

With much *epanchement de cœur*, he informed the chief of the state of his soul and spirits. "With a mind naturally inclined to melancholy, and a keen sense of enquiry, I had applied myself to metaphysical researches, and reasoned beyond my depth on such subjects as it is not given to man to know. I told him I had rendered my mind a camera obscura; that in the heat of youth I had felt the 'all is vanity' of one who had exhausted all the sweets of his being with dull repetition. I told him that I had almost become for ever incapable of taking a part in action." Paoli listened to these singular and overcharged confessions. Advisedly enough, Boswell described to him his new friend Johnson, repeating to him several of his pungent sayings, which were happily chosen, such as that of "counting the spoons in the case of a person who denied there was any difference between virtue and vice," and that of going to "milk the bull." Johnson must have been flattered to learn that Paoli translated these into Italian for the Corsicans.

At last he had to quit this pleasant place, and, on his way back, paid a visit to the French portion of the island, where he was seized with an ague or fever. The Count de Marbœuf treated him with great kindness. Here it was once more repeated that he had a mission. "Idle as these rumours were, it is a fact that, when I was at Genoa, M. Gherardi, one of his Secretaries of State, very seriously told me, 'Sir, you have made me

tremble, though I never saw you before;' and when I smiled, and assured him that I was just a simple traveller, he shook his head, but said he had very authentic information concerning me. He then told me with great gravity that 'while I travelled in Corsica I was dressed in scarlet and gold, but when I paid my respects to the Supreme Council at Corte I appeared in a full suit of black.' This important truth I fairly owned, and he seemed to exult over me."

Such, then, was this spirited adventure, which, it must be said, fashioned the "cub of Newmarket" into a very tolerable man of the world. We are astonished to find the number of distinguished personages abroad to whom the young traveller contrived to introduce himself, and whose friendship and attention he secured. In so young a man, just enlarged from a Scotch college, this was remarkable, and betokened social powers of a high order. We may wonder, too, how readily he picked up French and Italian languages.

Boswell to Wilkes.

"Genoa, Dec. 1, 1765.

"DEAR SIR,—You are a very sad man indeed. I wrote you a long letter from Venice, and a most classic one from Mantua. I directed them both 'à M. Wilkes, à Naples,' according to your desire, and am sure that I did not neglect to give you my address at this place. After making a very singular tour to the island of Corsica, I arrived at Genoa, in full hopes of finding a packet of your wit and gayety; but to my great disappointment there was not a line from you. If you have received the letters I mention, I must be very angry with you, for, although I have heard that you have been running over the world, trying the keenness

of your wit with that of Voltaire, I cannot excuse your forgetting an ancient laird.

"I have had a flow of spirits, and have written above a hundred and fifty lines of my Epistle to you. I am in hopes it will be a piece that will do us both some honour. I set out for Paris in a week hence. My father is ill, and anxious to see me. If I do not hear that he is better, my stay in France at this time must be very short.

"Pray write to me immediately, at Lyons, by the address which you will find on the opposite page. It will please me to be thus met by you on my road to Paris. Adieu, dear Sir.—J. B.

"*A Monsieur — Boswell,*
Gentilhomme Ecossais,
Chez M. Isidore, Père et Fils.

"P.S.—I beg you may put 'John Wilkes' at the end of your letters, that they may not look like unsigned title deeds."

This request was, of course, made with a view to the collection of recollections which he was making, and which Johnson would not sanction his publishing.

When he reached Lyons, he bethought him of his "wild philosopher," who he heard was at Paris, and wrote him this enthusiastic letter.

Boswell to Rousseau.

"Lyons, Jan. 4, 1766.

"ILLUSTRIOUS PHILOSOPHER,—At last I see day. For many months I have been uncertain into what corner you have retired, and knew not where to address a letter to. Did you receive one that I wrote from

Leghorn on the eve of my sailing for Corsica? I was six weeks in the island. I saw much of its inhabitants. I enquired into everything with that diligence which you know I can exert. I knew the brave Paoli intimately. I have treasures to communicate to you. If you are as devoted to the gallant islanders, as you were when you wrote to the noble Buttafuoco, you will embrace me with enthusiasm. You will forget all your troubles for my one evening. I am under the greatest obligations to you for having sent me to Corsica. This expedition has done me a world of good. It is as though the whole of Plutarch's lives had dissolved within me. Paoli has soothed my soul in a way that it will never lose. I am no longer the delicate restless being who was complaining in the Val de Travers. I am a man, I think for myself. You have given me new birth.

"I arrived here yesterday, and, this evening, Madame Boy Latour tells me that you are at Paris. I would give much that you could have seen the delight with which I received this news. I take Monday's diligence, and by Saturday shall be at Paris. I never swear: otherwise you would hear a volley of oaths—by which excited Englishmen express satisfaction more than usual.

"I am devoted to the Corsicans body and soul. If you, the illustrious Rousseau, the philosopher they have chosen to aid them by his lights to preserve and enjoy the liberty they have won so heroically,—if you have turned cold for these brave islanders, I am so far man as to look on you with pity.* But generosity is a part of your existence, and I am not one of those who

* "Je suis tant homme, de pouvoir vous regarder avec pitié." The editor of the "œuvres inédites" is contemptuous on Boswell's French, and has to expound this piece of "jargon." He prefers, he says, not to amend it, as such a course would interfere with its genuine tone.

believe that the noble qualities of the soul can be extinguished.

"It is reported that you go to England. What a delightful prospect for me! I am certain there is not a man in the world more eager to contribute to your happiness than I am: and you, too, may be sure of it. In due time you will trust in my Lord Marischal's young friend. I look forward with perfect enjoyment to making you acquainted with Mr. Johnson, of whom I talked to you so much at Motier, and of whom you said, '*I shall love that man: I shall respect him*,'— that, too, after being told that he had little respect for you. But I know you both, and though one uses his strength to support the wisdom of ages, the other to support the dreams of his sublime and singular soul, I am certain both your great souls will meet in warmth. You will visit Scotland, see our romantic country: Rousseau will meditate among the venerable groves of my ancestors: and will believe with me that nymphs, genii, angels, and all kinds of happy and benevolent spirits hold their choirs there!

"Adieu, my dear Sir. How I long to see you; to tell you a thousand anecdotes about Corsica, which will delight you! The moment I reach Paris, I shall send to Madame Duchesne where to find a line from you. I am always for you what I was at Mortier."

The signature of this letter had been erased, but there is no mistaking the style.* It turned out that Rousseau had set off on his famous expedition to London, on the day before Boswell wrote his letter. It is likely that it never reached him. On the quarrel breaking out between Hume and Rousseau,

* Musset Pathay, "Œuvres inédites de Rousseau," tom. ii.

which was the amusement of the town, Boswell could not resist contributing his share to the general ridicule. Though he had been "very hearty," as he phrased it, with Hume, he wrote burlesque verses on the character of each disputant, and designed a caricature of a coarse kind which was in the print-shops. He complained, however, that they had altered it in the drawing, and had applied the most offensive incident to the figure of Hume.

This intimacy with Rousseau, Voltaire, and others of their kind, made Johnson say that he had been "keeping very pretty company when abroad." The young man pleaded that their conversation gave him much pleasure, and that Rousseau's writings "edified him." He took care, however, to say nothing to his great friend of a strange act of complaisance, with which he gratified the French philosopher. He was requested to escort over to London the notorious Le Vasseur, Rousseau's mistress, and he accepted the office. The incident was described in a letter of Hume's, dated January 12, 1766 :—

"A letter has come open to me from Guy, the bookseller, by which I learn that Mademoiselle sets out first in company with a friend of mine, a young gentleman very good-humoured, very agreeable, and very mad. He visited Rousseau in his mountains, who gave him a recommendation to Paoli, the King of Corsica; where this gentleman, whose name is Boswell, went last summer in search of adventures. He has such a rage for literature, that I dread some event fatal to our friend's honour."

His plan was to remain in Paris for the winter; but when he arrived in that city, news reached him of his mother's death, which, however, does not seem to have quickened his movements, for we find him remaining for

some time in London, waiting on Mr. Pitt, and supping with Johnson. It was unfortunate that he was never able to be with his near relations at their last moments, and he was far away, or arrived too late, when his father, his mother, and his wife were on their deathbeds.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. PITT—"THE CELEBRATED MR. BOSWELL."

1766.

BOSWELL arrived in London in February, 1766, and was presently much engrossed in putting the Corsicans "in a proper situation," as he phrased it, and preparing his agreeable book of travels and adventures, which, however, did not appear until a year or so later. He had learned so much of the world in his travels, that we are hardly surprised at the rather cold tone in which he describes his meeting with his friend Johnson—a curious contrast to the emotion with which he had parted with him. "I returned," he writes in February, "and found Dr. Johnson in a good house in Johnson's Court. . . . His faithful Francis was still attending him. He received me with much kindness. The fragments of our first conversation, which I have preserved, are these, etc." Believing himself now to be a sort of missionary for the Corsican cause, and under a delusion that he had credentials, he succeeded in obtaining an interview with Mr. Pitt, presenting himself in his Corsican fancy dress! He eagerly pressed on him the necessity of at once doing something for the gallant islanders. There was something bold, if not intrusive, in this. But he was

received very politely, and followed up his interview with letters which were replied to courteously.*

Mr. Boswell to Mr. Pitt.

"St. James' Street, February 19, 1766.

"SIR,—I have had the honour to receive your most obliging letter, and can with difficulty restrain myself from paying you compliments on the very genteel manner in which you are pleased to treat me. But I come from a people among whom even the lowest arts of insinuation are unknown. However, you may by political circumstances be, in one view, a simple individual, yet, Sir, Mr. Pitt will always be the prime minister of the brave, the secretary of freedom and of spirit; and I hope that I may with propriety talk to him of the views of the illustrious Paoli.

"Be that as it may, I shall very much value the honour of being admitted to your acquaintance.—I am, Sir, with the highest esteem," etc.

When he returned to Auchinleck he still pursued Mr. Pitt with his importunities, which were acknowledged in the same good-humoured and respectful fashion. This only stimulated Mr. Boswell's pen. One of the minister's letters, he tells us, was three pages long.

Mr. Boswell to Lord Chatham.

"Auchinleck, April 18, 1767.

"MY LORD,—I have had the honour to receive your Lordship's letter from Bath, and I perfectly feel the

* "Some of the particulars of this interview, all of which he committed to writing, he has been heard to mention in a very interesting manner" ("Memoir," by himself.) This shows what an agreeable book of recollections we have lost by the destruction of his papers, and which he was dissuaded by Johnson from putting in order.

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sentiments which it contains. I only wish that the circumstances were such that your Lordship would have an opportunity of showing the interest you take in the fate of a people who well deserve the favour of so illustrious a patron of liberty as your Lordship. I have communicated to General Paoli the contents of your Lordship's letter, and I am persuaded he will think as I do. Allow me to give your Lordship another quotation from a letter of that hero. It is addressed to a friend of mine at Leghorn. 'Essendo al ministerio il Conte di Chatham, voglio sperar tutto il buon successo alla generosa premuira del Signor Boswell,' etc.

"I leave with the Earl of Chatham these words of General Paoli, and I am persuaded *quell' anima grande* will not forget them.

"Your Lordship applauds my generous warmth for so striking a character as the able chief. Indeed, my Lord, I have the happiness of being capable to contemplate with supreme delight those distinguished spirits by whom God is sometimes pleased to honour humanity, and as I have no personal favour to ask your Lordship, I will tell you, with the confidence of one who does not fear to be thought a flatterer, that your character, my Lord, has filled many of my best hours with the noble admiration which a disinterested soul can enjoy in the bower of philosophy.

"I think it my duty to inform your Lordship that I am preparing to publish an account of Corsica: my plan is, first, to give a geographical and physical description of the island; and, secondly, to exhibit a concise view of the revolutions it has undergone from the earliest times till now; thirdly, to show the present state of Corsica in every respect; and, lastly, I subjoin my journal of a tour to that island, in which I relate a variety of anecdotes,

and treasure up many memoirs of the illustrious general of the Corsicans.

"As for myself, to please a worthy and respected father, one of our Scots judges, I studied law, and am now fairly entered to the Bar. I begin to like it. I can labour hard; I feel myself coming forward, and I hope to be useful to my country. Could your Lordship find time to honour me now and then with a letter? I have been told how favourably your Lordship has spoken of me. To correspond with a Paoli and a Chatham is enough to keep a young man ever ardent in the pursuit of a virtuous fame.—I ever am, my Lord, with the highest admiration, your Lordship's much obliged humble servant, JAMES BOSWELL."

This burst of confidential and personal matters is in Boswell's happy style. He always gave way to such *épanchements*, fancying he was interesting his correspondent. It was, indeed, long before this passion wore itself out; and there was yet to be another "burst" before he succeeded in "emptying his head of Corsica."* This took the shape of a rather poorish little volume, entitled "British Essays in Favour of the Brave Corsican," which he culled from newspapers, many of them written by himself, and which were often in the ephemeral type of such productions. The characteristic portion is an allegorical frontispiece, which our author expounded *more suo*.†

* He even joined in a subscription for sending out arms and ammunition to the "Brave Corsicans," and ordered the pieces himself: "The Carron Company has furnished me them very cheap; there are two 32-pounders, four 24's, four 18's, and twenty 9-pounders, with one hundred and fifty ball to each. It is really a tolerable train of artillery."

† Explanation of the frontispiece: "Corsica, with her usual attendant, the dog, was an emblem of fidelity and resolution, with a shield blazoned with the Moor's head as a crest, lying on the

When he was at Auchinleck he indulged in these odd meditations: "My father said to me, 'I am much pleased with your conduct in every respect.' After all my anxiety while abroad, here is the most perfect approbation and calm of mind. I never felt such sollid (*sic*) happiness. But I feel I am not so happy with this approbation and this calm as I expected to be. Alas! such is the condition of humanity, that we are not allowed here the perfect enjoyment of the satisfaction which arises even from worth. But why do I say 'alas!' when I really look upon this life merely as a transient state? . . . I must stay at Auchinleck. I have there just the kind of complaining proper for me. All must complain, and I more than most of my fellow-creatures." But the old judge was much disgusted with this enthusiasm for one whom he styled a "land-louping fellow." In vain his son "wrote to him with warmth, with an honest wishing that he should think of me as I am; but my letters shock him, and every expression in them is interpreted unfavourably. How galling it is for the friend of Paoli to be treated so! I have answered him in my own style. I will be myself." There is something comic in this unconsciousness that he is not recommending either himself or his cause, and the idea that he could bring over the grim old judge, who, he thought, ought to love Paoli, because *he* loved him.

ground, supplicates assistance from Great Britain, while France, elated with vain ambition, comes in a barbarous manner ready to assassinate Corsica. Great Britain with a generous dignity holds her shield over the head of Corsica, assuring her of safety. In a corner is a basso-relievo of the old fable of the lion and the mouse. The lion has shown kindness to the mouse; sometime after, the lion was entangled, etc. The fable shows how a very inconsiderable man or a very small state may have an opportunity of repaying a kindness to her greatest friend. The motto is 'Magna Britannia Corsica protegit.' Great Britain protects Corsica. I am obliged to the ingenious artist, Mr. Miller, for the readiness with which he has executed my ideas, and improved them with his own."

He was also busy preparing an account of his travels, but what with dissipation, love-affairs, and some more serious pursuits, it took him much time to get his notes into order, and the work did not appear until the year 1768. Later he was very eager to have his mentor's encouragement to publish an account of his travels on the continent and of all that he had seen. The doctor roughly discouraged him, saying that he had nothing to tell beyond what had been already told, but we are inclined to think that the sage was wrong. The tourist had met, or intruded on, not a few remarkable persons; he had seen much that was curious and entertaining; and had put down in his note-book much odd information and many anecdotes.

Boswell to Wilkes.

"Auchinleck, May 6, 1766.

"DEAR SIR,—I shall never forget your humane and kind behaviour to me at Paris, when I received the melancholy news of my mother's death. I have been doing all in my power to comfort my worthy father, and I thank God he is now greatly recovered. You suggested to me a very just reflection that it was lucky for my father that he received the severe stroke when I was absent, for had I been with him he would have had nothing strong enough to divert his attention from an irrepairable loss, whereas, my return from my travels would be a new object to him, and help to compensate for his great misfortune. I have found the truth of what you said, and for once in my life have been of considerable use. I know you will not like me the worse that I have been doing my duty. I have often thought of you with affection; indeed, I never admired you more than when you tried to alleviate my affliction; for, whether it be

from self-interest or not, I set a higher value on the qualities of the heart than on those of the head. I hope you are better, and am anxious to hear particularly everything that concerns you. I have a great deal to say to you; but you forgot to give me your address, and I think it would be improper for me to write to you with our usual freedom till I am sure that my letters can go safe. I enclose this under cover to Mr. Foley. If you receive it, pray write to me immediately. My address is at the Honourable Lord Auchinleck's, at Edinburgh, North Britain.—Believe me, dear Sir, yours as ever, JAMES BOSWELL." *

* MS., British Museum.

CHAPTER X.

CALLED TO THE BAR—THE DOUGLAS CAUSE.

1767.

But presently a new craze, pursued with the same ardour, was for a time to drive this Corsican business out of his head. According to his compact with his father, he was now seriously to enter on his profession. When he went to the Scottish Bar, on his return from his travels, he no doubt "took his name off the books" of the Inner Temple, or allowed the business to lapse, though, some years later, in May, 1775, we find him again entering that Inn. As Johnson then wrote to Mrs. Thrale, "He has entered himself at the Temple, and I joined in his bond." It is curious that his friend had not recorded something about this interesting occasion, or of the interview with the Treasurer, when Johnson would have acquitted himself as he did on occasions of state, with a stately "Now, Mr. Treasurer," and courteous questions in pursuit of information. Even after taking this step, the matter seems to have been again dropped; for Boswell was not actually called until February 10, 1786, and, as he wrote in his note-book, "When I found I could labour, I said it was a pity to dig in a lead mine when I could get to a gold one." But he was to find no gold mine, and it had been better that he had continued to work the lead one he had abandoned. Before being admitted as an advocate,

he had, according to rule, to prepare a thesis, or exercise, and this he inscribed to Lord Mountstuart, his "noble patron," or Mæcenas, in a Latin dedication, in which Johnson found a considerable number of solecisms. When he was "called" he made a pleasant remark to his brethren, which pleased himself also, for he set it down. "After putting on the gown, he said with great good humour to his brother advocates, 'Gentlemen, I am prest into the service here; but I have observed that a prest man, either by sea or land, after a little time does just as well as a volunteer.'" It must be said this was almost witty. Nor did he spare his new brethren in these sallies. An advocate who was clever and ingenious, but had a weak voice and diminutive appearance, he said, reminded him of "Giardini's playing upon a child's fiddle." Of Crosbie, the advocate, who was very self-opinionated, he said, "I said Crosbie's head was like a Christmas-box with a slit in the top of it. If once a thing has got into it, you cannot get it out again but by breaking the box. 'We must break your head, Crosbie,' said I. . . . I said the Court of Session was much more quiet and agreeable when President Dundas was absent. 'When he is there,' said I, 'you feel yourself as in a bleachfield with a large dog in it. He is chained and does not bite you. But he barks *wowf wowf*, and makes you start; your nerves are hurt by him.'"

One who knew Boswell well has described him at this time, though the account has a suspicious likeness to his own style; and it is curious to contrast this sketch with that of the decorous being who "waits so respectfully on Dr. Johnson," moralizes on his own defects, and the vices of others. It is clear that the sage, a "great disperser of humbug," did not suspect the laxities of his friend.

"He passed through these trials with honour. Called to the Bar, he distinguished himself in his first appearances by an ingenious invention of arguments, a brilliancy of eloquence, and a quickness of wit, such as sufficiently confirmed that favourable opinion of his talents which his friends had long entertained. Lady Margaret Macdonald gave a masquerade, a species of amusement very unusual at Edinburgh; and James Boswell, almost alone of all the masqued characters, was admired as having acted the part he had assumed with charming felicity. He was extensively acquainted in the country, and was beloved among his acquaintance; he was an ingenious and winning pleader, if not yet a profound lawyer. In the papers, manuscript or printed, which he had occasion to prepare for the information of the judges in those causes in which he was employed, there appeared commonly a grace, an eloquence, and a correctness of composition."

With his usual cleverness, he contrived to associate himself with a highly "sensational" trial which was now to engross the attention of the whole kingdom. The remarkable "Douglas Cause," which has a similarity to the well-known Annesley Peerage claim, decided about the same time, caused much excitement in Scotland, where every one seems to have taken one side or the other. The claimant was Mr. Douglas, who was opposed by the great House of Hamilton. The point in dispute was the marriage of Lady Jane Douglas to Sir John Stewart, which was celebrated abroad, under many circumstances of mystery and suspicion. One of the children, Archibald, was the claimant; and after prolonged discussion, commissioners being sent abroad to examine witnesses, etc., it was decided by the Court of Session, but only by the casting voice of the presi-

dent, that the child was supposititious. On an appeal to the House of Lords, this decision was reversed. Lord Auchinleck took the side of the claimant, and for once Boswell found himself agreeing with his father on an important question.

"In 1767," he tells us, with amusing self-sufficiency, "the great DOUGLAS CAUSE being an object of universal attention and interest, Mr. Boswell *generously volunteered* in favour of Mr. Douglas. With a labour of which few are capable, he compressed the substance of the immense volumes of proofs and arguments into an octavo pamphlet, which he published, with the title 'The Essence of the Douglas Cause;' and, as it was thus made intelligible without a tedious study, *we may ascribe to this pamphlet a great share of the popularity on Mr. Douglas's side, which was of infinite consequence when a division of the House of Lords upon an appeal was apprehended;* not to mention that its effect was said to be considerable in a certain important quarter. He also took care to keep the newspapers and other publications *incessantly warm* with various writings, both in prose and verse, all tending to touch the heart and rouse the parental and sympathetic feelings. His aid upon this occasion was acknowledged by some very well written letters by the 'worthy Queensberry.' It is well known that the hard decree was reversed, and that he whom Boswell thus supported now enjoys the large property of his family." *

Boswell's partisanship prompted him to every conceivable exertion, not merely in the discussion of the case, but to bring himself forward, and acquire notoriety. He succeeded in getting himself named, or, as he candidly

* Memoir in the *European Magazine*.

owns, at least *volunteered* to be named, one of the counsel.*

His summary of the case (a reply to a pleading for the other side, "Considerations on the Douglas Cause") was done in a lawyer-like fashion; but I have never seen a copy, though portions were published in the *Scots Magazine*. It proves what a curious power of industry was found in Boswell, whenever his enthusiasm was roused. In his introduction he tells us: "I was present during the whole deliberation of the cause before the Court of Session. I took very full notes, and I cannot help regretting that the speeches of several able judges have been published in a very partial manner. The greatest part of the arguments are selected from the genuine notes of the speeches, and a variety of hints have been furnished for different periodical publications."

So transported was he with a sort of fanatical enthusiasm in the matter, that he wrote an apologue, or fairy tale, on the case. This he called "Dorando, a Spanish Tale," in which the Douglas story was dressed up as a sort of fiction, with Spanish names and incidents. It has been doubted whether this was Boswell's work. His name is not to it, and he never mentioned or boasted of it to Johnson. It is certain, however, that it is of his composition.†

* His assistance must have been of the slightest, as his name is the last on the list. "For the defendant: James Garden, now Lord Gardenston; Mr. James Burnett, now Lord Monboddo; Mr. James Montgomery, now Lord Advocate; Mr. Robert Macqueen; Mr. David Rae; Mr. Islay Campbell; Mr. Robert Sinclair; Mr. John Pringle; Mr. Henry Dundas, Solicitor-General; Mr. Charles Brown; Mr. James Boswell."

† In a letter to Temple he speaks of "the courier who brings you this, and 'Dorando,' of which I have sent only one copy, as I have few here. When you get to London *I shall desire Mr. Wilkie, my publisher*, to let you have two or three of them." A

A few extracts from the tale are given in the *Scots Magazine*. "The Chief Justice was a man of great knowledge in the laws of his country. He was descended of a distinguished family in Andalusia which had produced so many senators that the office seemed to be hereditary. This personage, then, delivered judgment in the case which was exactly like the Douglas case. 'Can I suppose all this to be a complication of guilt, of deliberate and downright perjury? No, Signors, I

further proof is, that some verses on the statue of Charles II. in the Parliament Square are quoted in the *Scots Magazine* as being "by the author of 'Dorando,'" and these we find in the *Public Advertiser*, where they originally appeared, with the name of Mr. James Boswell as the writer. The best evidence, perhaps, is the odd style in which Boswell called attention to his work in the *Scots Magazine*, where he was allowed to insert what he pleased. "This day was published and sold by Drummond at Ossian's Head, Edinburgh, price 1*s*., 'Dorando, a Spanish Tale.' Nobody can take it amiss, though we give it as our opinion that 'Dorando,' though published in London, is written by one of our countrymen. We do not give our reasons for thinking so, but they are strong. No performance, we will venture to say, was ever better intended. At a time when all ranks are agitated with expectation, and parties have run so high that much ill-will and many unhappy animosities are raised, 'Dorando' comes to calm the violence and diffuse good temper and complacency of disposition."

The public was then reminded that "this day was published 'Dorando,' the second edition. From an imagined similarity between 'Dorando' and the great Douglas cause, *the sale of it has been very rapid.*" The notice goes on to say that "extracts from his pamphlet and remarks were inserted in the *Mercury*" (a Scotch paper) "of June 20. We insert what we presume were the most exceptionable passages. . . . Doubtless we find in 'Dorando' a chief justice, very like a distinguished personage who possesses the universal veneration and attachment of the country, and an ILLUSTRIOUS MINISTER, very like to him to whom Great Britain owes her late glorious conquests." Even attacks the author turned to profit; for the reviewers, it seems, pronounced that "this is a most contemptible pamphlet, and alludes, though in a very unfair and imperfect manner, to the Douglas cause. Contemptible, however, as it may seem, it has been rendered of importance by the judicatory which decided the case having taken into custody the publishers."

cannot, unless upon a strong proof indeed. They have embarked us on a *mare magnum* of circumstances, picked up at the distance of fourteen years. And I must say, picked up from the streets of Paris, from the very dregs of the French canaille. . . . Signors, I am only surprised to see Don Pedro here. I know him, and I regard him; and it has all along been most difficult for me to reconcile the case and the lawyer; but when I consider how he has been led away, I excuse him.' The populace shouted at the decision: the windows were illuminated; while healths and prosperity were drunk to the Prince Fernando of Dorando.

"Stung to the quick, the Arvidoro train carried this cause by appeal before the grandees of Spain at Madrid. But it only served to make their desperate schemes fail. The illustrious assembly could hardly hear them with patience. One of the grandees muttered that the Arvidoro party had said strong things, that they had a heavy memorial. 'Heavy!' cried the Chancellor, with a violence that made his brother shrink within himself—'heavy! Yes, it is heavy; but heavy as chaos.'"

Considering that the matter was *sub judice*, this deciding it in the form of fiction, together with the praise and abuse of the two parties to the cause, was indecorous. The author did not anticipate that he had got into a serious scrape by the publication, extracts from which, given in the Scotch newspapers, were held by the Scotch judges to be a sort of contempt of court. On June 29th it was announced that—"This day was published the third edition of 'Dorando.' The public may be assured that there is no foundation for the report that warrants are issued to apprehend the author of 'Dorando.'" Some English shorthand writers, who

had come to Scotland to take notes of the case, were much ridiculed, and several of the newspapers were brought before the court on two charges. We find that Mr. Boswell appeared for the *Advertiser*, and drew up a sort of defence, in which it is stated that "as to the letter from Berwick, the matter stands thus: It was a thing commonly reported in town that a set of short-hand writers were come from London in order to take notes in the Douglas cause. Their arrival had been mentioned, and a humorous description of their genealogy and characters had been given." With this so-called "humorous description" Mr. Boswell had probably something to do. The result was, however, the disappearance or entire suppression of "Dorando," of which I have never been able to find a copy, and which thus met with the same fate as the author's extraordinary "Ode on Slavery" to be described later. Lord Auchinleck gave his judgment in the case, on a technical point, in his own characteristic style.*

* We may quote a few passages which are marked with the dry sarcastic touch of the judge: "I have considered the cause with all the attention in my power, and am not at all surprized that your Lordships should differ in opinion about it, when I consider the immensity of the proofs and the long laboured argument upon these proofs.

"In considering this cause, I endeavoured to take care not to be as it were drawn off at the tangent, and was always willing to listen to any further evidence that could be got. I was therefore very glad to have Isabel Walker examined again. To the questions which I thought material, this witness answered pointedly and distinctly; and though she underwent an examination of two days from the plaintiffs, with the special view, as appeared, of making her contradict her former evidence, yet, except in one trifling instance, she kept her temper throughout the whole, and had to me so strong an appearance of integrity, that I do believe that every thing she has swore is agreeable to truth. Before I enter into the cause, I must premise a few general observations. In all questions about filiation, sceptical people may have opportunities of raising abundance of doubts. . . .

Boswell, however, did not confine himself to the mere decorous functions of counsel or pleader. His antics

"These are the general principles which, applied to this case, will, in my opinion, direct the decision of it. However, I must observe farther, that I could have wished that we could have had a more full, clear, and satisfying evidence than we have: and farther, that this process had taken rise at a time when there were no bye motives to bring it, instead of its being brought immediately after the defendant had defeated Duke Hamilton in point of law. I own that I cannot get out of my view the method in which this process was raised and conducted. This is material, because it will account for many singularities occurring in this cause. Instead of applying for an act and commission from this Court to bring a proof of the imposture, the plaintiffs were pleased to bring their criminal action before the parliament of Paris, and procured a *monitoire important*, which treats Sir John Stewart and Mrs. Hewit as already convicted of the supposition of children; and under the word *Quidam*, makes the thing as plain as if they had put in the initials of their names. I did not condemn this process before the Tournelle because it was unfashionable, but because it was unjust and oppressive to the last degree; and I think I can give pointed evidence, that this my opinion was well founded. I shall give two or three instances which will sufficiently explain what I mean. . . . Madam Sautry, the mantua-maker at Rheims, makes strong endeavours to disprove the pregnancy; she even *measures* Lady Jane to make sure work of it. When we look into the plainte to the parliament of Paris, they appear to be satisfied that Lady Jane had every appearance of pregnancy; but after the monitoire appeared, the memories of the witnesses underwent a great alteration; some of them being very much weakened in this particular, when others were as much improved.

"Having thus taken a general view of the proof brought by the plaintiffs in this cause, I have only to add, that I pay no great credit either to the books of Police, or to those of the Hotels in Paris. The plaintiffs at first set forth, that these books were infallibly sure, and liable to no errors or mistakes; whereas to me it really appears to be a battle of books betwixt the respective hotels.

"I come now to touch shortly upon the proof of the alibi at Mons. Godofroi's: In instructing of which I think the plaintiffs have totally failed, and I must continue to think so, except I can believe that he and his wife have memories superior to *Joseph Scaliger's*. They have, indeed, most unaccountable memories, according to their own account of the matter; for they even remember what coat Sir John had on in the year 1748. I am, however, unwilling to believe them to be perjured, but I believe

and excitement almost warranted the belief of his friends that he had gone mad on the subject. His father was heard to say, in his own curious but expressive jargon, that "James had taken a tout on a new horn;" and Mr. Ramsay, his father's intimate friend, declared that his behaviour reached a degree of intemperance and absurdity that was incredible.

"When he heard that the House of Lords had reversed the decision of the Court of Sessions, it was said that he put himself at the head of an uproarious mob which broke the judge's windows and insulted them. He was now really thought to be mad or "daft," and his father, with tears in his eyes, entreated the president to commit him to the Tolbooth. He was brought before the sheriff to be examined, and thus told the story of his doings:— "After I had communicated the glorious news to my father, who received them very coolly, I went to the Cross to see what was going on. There I overheard a group of fellows forming this plan of operations. One of them asked what sort of a man the sheriff was, and whether he was not to be dreaded. 'No, no,' said another fellow, 'he is a puppet of the president's making.'" Once Mr. Stewart Moncrieff started up and exclaimed, "By my soul, Boswell, you're mad!" "Sir," answered the other, "swear by your £60,000, by your

that they had their memories refreshed by the monitoire, as many others seemed to have had theirs weakened by it. They have been misled by their books, which they think all very accurate, though it is proved to demonstration they are liable to many errors and mistakes. And because they had marked Sir John Stewart's name in the *Livre d'Inspecteur*, therefore they take up an apprehension that the *blank* article of the 4th of July, in their *Livre d'epence*, relates to him and Lady Jane and Mrs. Hewit.

"Upon the whole, my opinion is, that as the defendant is now in complete possession of his estate; and as the evidence against him is neither unsuspicious nor conclusive, that therefore he falls to be assoilzied."

ice house, by your peach and grape houses, but do not swear by what you value so little as your soul." There was some wit in this madness, but the probability was that "Bozzy" had been celebrating the victory in stoups of wine.

One of the most singular and unfavourable traits in Boswell's character was the delight he found in an embarrassment which most men are eager to avoid—viz. controversy with women. Mr. Boswell entered on these conflicts in rather an unchivalrous spirit, allowing no privilege on account of sex or age, and dealing his "swashing blows" with malice, and even spite. This seems rather unchivalrous, but it can be supported by instances which readily recur to the memory; such as his treatment of Mrs. Thrale, of Miss Seward, of Mrs. Montagu, when those ladies, even if they had offended, were entitled to courteous treatment. It must be said, however, that this idea never even seems to have occurred to him, and that it was his established principle that any one who interfered with him or his books was his mortal enemy, whether male or female. Thus, during the progress of the cause, an amusing and angry discussion arose between him and a venerable Scotch lady, the Honourable Miss Primrose, whose age and rank should have entitled her to proper consideration. As he was now writing the "Essence of the Douglas Cause," and had established himself as a notable personage, the notable friend, too, of "the great Lexicographer," he was not to be trifled with, or contradicted.

The offence of the lady was this. In her evidence at the trial she had spoken of a conversation recounted to her by her mother, the Dowager Lady Stair, and which had taken place between her and Lady Jane Douglas. On this point a daughter might naturally claim to speak.

But, no; Mr. Boswell, in his "Essence," took upon himself to declare that "he was assured that there were several persons of good character still alive, who had heard Lady Stair tell Miss Primrose that she was mistaken, and that this account was given, not by Lady Jane, but by another person." The form of this contradiction was certainly offensive, and Miss Primrose, thus rudely challenged, wrote haughtily, but with spirit, to demand the names of "those persons of good character" upon whose authority he rested his assertion: "otherwise I must hold him to be the original author of the averment." This insinuation Mr. Boswell had brought on himself. His answer was characteristic. "The Author of 'The Essence of the Douglas Cause,' presents his compliments to the Honourable Miss Margaret Primrose. That lady must be sensible that the story she has introduced into her deposition is *exceedingly improbable*. Lady Jane Douglas has surely more good sense than to give a different account to Lady Stair from that which she gave to every one else. He hopes that, upon due recollection, Mrs. Primrose will be satisfied *that either her hearing, or her memory has failed her*. . . . He thinks this matter too serious to be discussed in a newspaper, but if he be called upon in proper manner Mrs. Primrose shall know his authority."

Boswell here felt himself in a difficulty, and his rude speech as to the failure of the lady's mind or memory was prompted by either annoyance or malice. The lady was one of those sturdy Scotch dames whose shrewd faces are seen on Raeburn's canvases, and was not to be trifled with or intimidated; so no satisfaction was to be obtained for the slippery Boswell in this way. Mrs. Primrose now sent a friend to him to ask his authority for his statement, upon which the friend was informed

"that Mr. Boswell declined giving his authority when privately called upon, but was willing to do so if asked in a public manner." "Finding," the lady goes on, "that a private answer was avoided, I publicly demanded one, and am now told that I shall receive an answer when my demand is made in a proper form. To this demand I received an answer that the proper form was an action for defamation." This course she declined to take: "I therefore end with him thus; that if he persists in keeping up his supposed authority I must and will consider him as the original author of the averment himself." Mr. Boswell was not to be thus disposed of and took refuge in fresh personalities. "Mrs. Margaret Primrose," he wrote in reply, "is pleased to think she has ended with the author of 'Essence, etc.' But the lady will find herself in a mistake here, too. She says that she received a verbal answer from me. But it is not fair in her to represent me as a man who would be impolite enough not to answer a lady's letter in writing. The truth is, I did write her an answer; I am sure she received it; and I own her forgetting so recent a circumstance, gives me a worse opinion of Mrs. Margaret Primrose's memory than I had before. A lady of her years should be cautious in relying too positively on either her hearing or memory, when she is assured both in public and private that her own mother told her she was in a mistake. I am sure I mentioned it in a most delicate manner; and wished it might remain so, but since she insists for it, here is my authority under her Grace the Duchess of Douglas' own hand;" and he quotes a long letter to this effect from the duchess. He signs his letter, "with great esteem." Miss Primrose replied, making little of the duchess's testimony, and reasserting her own. She then concluded by saying,

"Mr. Boswell need not be alarmed at any imputation on his politeness. Those who have read the whole of his correspondence must do him justice in this respect, in which Mrs. Primrose does not intend to vie with him; nor will she trouble herself or the public with anything further he or any other person shall please to say on the subject, since she has obtained her end of knowing his authority."

But Mr. Boswell was determined to have the last word. He had perused her last and long defence. He is sorry, very sorry, to find that she still persists in what he has gently endeavoured to correct; for he defies the lady to point out any mark of displeasure which he has shown. "If any persons have instigated Mrs. Margaret Primrose to exhibit herself in the newspapers," he will be pardoned in saying "they are not her friends, whatever flattering speeches they may have found means to make her hear. As a real friend, the author of the 'Essence' would beg of Mrs. Primrose to consider calmly by herself the unhappy effect of what she has deposed. It throws an imputation upon the memory of her worthy mother. . . . The author of the 'Essence' is happy that Mrs. Margaret has now recollected that she received a letter from him. He trusts that in time she will also recollect all that her grace the Duchess of Douglas has so distinctly related. If that shall be the case, and he shall presume to advise one who thinks she has a much better adviser, he would beg leave to suggest that a public recantation would be the best atonement. Mrs. Primrose has declared that she will not again make any answer; it will give the author of the 'Essence' much satisfaction if she still find herself obliged to alter her resolution, as such a recantation is the answer which he hopes to receive."

This brought the series of his exhibitions, during the Douglas cause, to a conclusion. Indeed, during these years, almost every transaction in which Boswell figured was to be marked by some exhibition of curious extravagance.

In the spring of the year 1768 was published the "Tour in Corsica"—which at once gave its author celebrity. He was spoken of in the papers as "Mr. Boswell, the celebrated traveller." As he tells us himself, in his little memoir: "This work is universally known as having not only passed through several editions in English, but been translated into Dutch, German, Italian,* and twice into French." Even the stern Johnson praises it in a letter to the author. It was admitted that his historical portion is so much "padding;" but his travels are told with spirit. For the book he received a hundred guineas.

He was indeed so eager to acquire notoriety for himself and his book, that he resorted to some extraordinary devices for the purpose. It is curious to see how some experienced judges of men had already taken the measure of his foolishness. Mr. Walpole gives a strange account of these antics, and, in a letter to Gray, of the 18th of February, 1768, writes: "Pray read the new account of Corsica; what relates to Paoli will amuse you much. There is a deal about the island and its dimensions that one does not care a straw for. The author, Boswell, is a strange being, and, like Cambridge, has a rage of knowing anybody that was ever talked of. He forced himself upon me in spite of my teeth and my

* It would have gratified the author to know that just one hundred and one years after the first issue a new translation should have been issued, "Relazioni della Corsica, di G. Boswell, Scudiere, transportata in Italiano, dall' originale Inglese." London, 1869.

doors, and I see has given a foolish account of all he could pick up from me about King Theodore. He then took an antipathy to me on Rousseau's account, abused me in the newspapers, and expected Rousseau to do so too; but as he came to see me no more, I forgave all the rest. I see he is now a little sick of Rousseau himself, but I hope it will not cure him of his anger to me; however, his book will amuse you." Gray's reply is equally contemptuous: "Mr. Boswell's book I was going to recommend to you when I received your letter. It has pleased and moved me strangely—all (I mean) that relates to Paoli. . . . The pamphlet proves what I have always maintained, that any fool may write a most valuable book by chance, if he will only tell us what he heard and said with veracity. Of Mr. Boswell's truth I have not the least suspicion, because I am sure he could invent nothing of the kind. The title of this part of his work is a dialogue between a Green Goose and a Hero." * This seems offensive enough; but the theory as to a fool writing a good book by chance, can scarcely be supported.

In this publication he contrived to offend Johnson, who was displeased at his publishing his letters, in which were some rather too extravagant expressions of regard. "All that you have to fear from me is the vexation of

* The work was printed at Edinburgh at the famous press of Foulis brothers, who, however, produced a rather unfavourable specimen of their workmanship. The second edition was printed in more handsome style by the Baldwins, and published by the Dillys, who were to issue the author's other works. In the preface he sets out some notions about spelling, declaring that the letter *k*, after *c*, should be restored (as in "publick"), and *u* in words like "labour;" though he could hardly thus justify such spelling as "tremenduous." There is a beautifully engraved device of his arms, etc., on the title—a decoration which also adorns the Hebrides "Tour."

disappointment. . . . the pleasure which I promised myself from the journals and remarks is so great, that perhaps no degree of attention or desirement will be sufficient to it. . . . I long to see you, etc." This overcharged estimate made the sage appear rather ridiculous, especially when Boswell's antics were attracting notoriety. Johnson wrote to him a little testily: "I could now tell why I should not write; for who would write to men who publish the letters of their friends, without their leave? Yet I write to you in spite of my caution, to tell you that I shall be glad to see you, and that I wish you would empty your head of Corsica, which I think has filled it rather too long."

"My dear Sir," was the reply,—"I have received your last letter, which, though very short, and by no means complimentary, yet gave me real pleasure, because it contains these words, 'I shall be glad, very glad, to see you.'—Surely you have no reason to complain of my publishing a single paragraph of one of your letters; the temptation to it was so strong. An irrevocable grant of your friendship, and your signifying my desire of visiting Corsica with the epithet of 'a wise and noble curiosity,' are to me more valuable than many of the grants of kings. But how can you bid me 'empty my head of Corsica'? My noble-minded friend, do you not feel for an oppressed nation bravely struggling to be free?" etc., etc.

"The celebrated traveller" was now *recherché*, and made much of,—"I am really the great man now," he tells us. "I have had David Hume in the forenoon, and Mr. Johnson in the afternoon of the same day visiting me. Sir John Pringle, Dr. Franklin, and some more company, dined with me to-day; and Mr. Johnson and General Oglethorpe one day, Mr. Garrick alone another, and

David Hume and some more *literati* dine with me next week. I give admirable dinners and good claret; and the moment I go abroad again, which will be in a day or two, I set up my chariot. This is enjoying the fruit of my labours, and appearing like the friend of Paoli. By-the-bye, the Earl of Pembroke and Captain Meadows are just setting out for Corsica, and I have the honour of introducing them by letter to the General. David Hume came on purpose the other day to tell me that the Duke of Bedford was very fond of my book, and had recommended it to the Duchess."

His lodgings were in Half-moon Street, and he was particularly gratified when the venerable General Oglethorpe, who recollected having shot snipe in one of the London squares, came and called on him, thus introducing himself: "My name, sir, is Oglethorpe, and I wish to be acquainted with you." Boswell, well read always, recalled Pope's lines on the general, and made so favourable an impression, that a cover was always kept for him at the old man's table. Incidents of that stirring career were related to him, and he seriously proposed writing his life. There was always something winning in Boswell's nature. He was a "good fellow."*

* He, however, did not remove the passages from Johnson's letters, in his later editions. He was always thus sturdy in holding by the text he had at first set down, as being "authentick."

CHAPTER XI.

BOSWELL'S "LOVES."

A REMARKABLE feature in this curiously blended character was an extreme susceptibility to the charms of the other sex. In one of his effusions he frankly confessed that "Boswell doth women adore;" and all through his life he seemed to be passing from one attachment to another, each being, as in the case of the amusing character in a modern farce, "the only woman he ever loved."

This "volatility" furnishes many entertaining passages in his life; as his vanity or impulsiveness made him take most of his friends into his confidence. At the same time it must be said, that no very venial or indulgent view can be taken of such passages, and, to speak plainly, Mr. Boswell lived a loose and dissipated life. There can be little doubt but that he shortened his days by his indulgence in general debauchery. The melancholy view is that he had really good and moral and religious instincts, and these, too, not merely sentimental, but, at times, earnest; he was even devout, but unhappily so enslaved to pleasure that he seems to have made little attempt to conform to what his principles and conscience prescribed. In process of time, he, as it were, gave himself a letter of licence, as a privileged person, pleading the "weakness of the flesh," and could preach morality and talk of his own vices in the same

breath. It may be doubted if there is anything in all the writings of the satirists comparable to this letter of his, addressed to the Rev. Mr. Temple :—

"This is just, Temple. You say the truths of morality are written in the hearts of all men, and they find it their interest to practise them. My dear friend, will you believe a specious moral essayist against your own experience? Don't you in the very same letter complain of the wickedness of those around you? Don't you talk of the tares in society? My friend, it is your office to labour cheerfully in the vineyard, and, if possible, to leave not a tare in Mamhead. Let us be moderate, patient, expect a gradual progress of refinement and felicity; in that hope I look up to the Lord of the Universe, with a grateful remembrance of the grand and mysterious propitiation which Christianity hath announced. . . ." This, so far, is edifying; but presently we are startled; for, after giving an outline of bachelor life and its advantages, he proceeds to tell his friend that, in certain cases "marriage is truly the condition in which true felicity is to be found. I think we may strike a good medium. Let us keep in mind the *nil admirari*, and not expect too much. It was from having too high expectations of enjoyment that I suffered so much, for the natural gloom of my mind was not sufficient to torment me in a degree so acute. In the meantime, my friend, I am happy enough to have a *dear infidel*, as you say; but don't think her unfaithful, I could not love her if she was. There is a baseness in all deceit which my soul is virtuous enough to abhor, and therefore I look with horror on adultery. But my amiable mistress is no longer bound to him who was her husband; he has used her shockingly ill; he has deserted her, he lives with another. Is she not then free? She is, it is

clear, and no arguments can disguise it. She has done everything to please me; she is perfectly generous, and would not hear of any present."

The two friends, Boswell and Temple, were scarcely model husbands. Temple married a lady with £1,300 as her fortune, but the marriage did not turn out happily, and a separation took place. He was a most unhappy person, subject to fits of depression, like his friend, and always in some sort of difficulty or wretchedness. He had much the same mixture of piety and dissipation that was found in Boswell. This friendship continued to the last days of Boswell's life, and their correspondence was never interrupted for thirty-seven years.*

The history of the long series of Boswell's more legitimate attachments is amusing enough. It would be difficult enough to count up his innumerable "Flames;" and in this he recalls Mr. Sterne, who so candidly confessed that, for his comfort and enjoyment, "he must ever have some Dulcinea in his head." Boswell began early, when he was a student at the University, and was only eighteen when he fell distractedly in love with Miss W——t; and now, only a year ago, in 1767, he had conceived a "grande passion" for a gardener's daughter, "who now puts on my fire and performs menial offices, like another wench; and yet, this time twelve months, I was so madly in love as to think of marrying her." This folly seems incredible in a man who had seen something of the world.

Embarrassed as he was with these various "charmers," this mercurial being had now seriously planned a regular matrimonial venture. He first thought of his cousin, Miss Bosville, in Yorkshire; but there was *one*

* The present Bishop of London is his grandson.

objection, as he complacently fancied,—she would not like to live in Scotland. "I shall see. There is a young lady in the neighbourhood here who has an estate of her own, between two and three hundred a year, just eighteen, a genteel person, an agreeable face, of a good family, sensible, good-tempered, cheerful, pious. You know my grand object is the ancient family of Auchinleck—a venerable and noble principle. How would it do to conclude an alliance with the neighbouring princess, and add her lands to our dominions? I should at once have a very pretty little estate, a good house, and a sweet place. My father is very fond of her; it would make him perfectly happy: he gives me hints in this way:—'I wish you had her—no bad scheme this; I think, a very good one.' My fair neighbour was a ward of my father's; she sits in our seat at church in Edinburgh." This new flame was Miss Blair, to whom he might have been married, had he only behaved like a reasonable being. Mr. Boswell's imaginary advances, his fits of heat and cold, renouncings and renewals, are like scenes in one of the old comedies. He once despatched his friend on a mission to report, to praise him, and stimulate the lady's feelings in every way. "Temple," he wrote, "you must be at Auchinleck, you must see my charming *bride!*" To make himself worthy of his princess, he had altogether reformed. But in drinking his princess's health he got intoxicated, and in that state committed all sorts of follies and extravagances, for which, of course, he was deeply repentant. "But I am abashed, and determine to keep the strictest watch." He gave his friend a paper of directions, which is amusing reading. When Mr. Temple arrived he was to present the letter. "Salute her and her mother; ask to walk. See the place fully; think what improvements should

be made. Talk of my mare, the purse, the chocolate. Tell, you are my very old and intimate friend. Praise me for my good qualities—you know them; but talk also how odd, how inconstant, how impetuous, how much accustomed to women of intrigue. Ask gravely, 'Pray don't you imagine there is something of madness in that family?' Talk of my various travels—German princes—Voltaire and Rousseau. Talk of my father; my strong desire to have my own house. Observe her well. *See, how amiable!* Judge if she would be happy *with your friend.* Think of me as the great man at *Adamtown—quite classical too!* Study the mother. *Remember well what passes.*" Temple duly returned to Edinburgh, after his mission was accomplished, and reported in glowing terms. Boswell wrote to the lady in raptures, telling her how charmed his emissary was, who "would not be able to write without saying some fine thing of her." No notice was taken of these compliments. "What can be the matter?" he wrote, "Probably the letter you carried was thought too strange and distant for any rational scheme." But there were some grounds for this uneasiness. A rival, a returned Indian, "a yellow Nabob," Mr. Fullerton, had been hanging about the heiress. Thus slighted, he began to discover that the grapes were sour. "I am curious to see how this matter will turn out. *The mare, the purse, the chocolate, where are they now?* I am certainly not deeply in love, for I am entertained with this dilemma, like another chapter in my adventures." Another idea: could she have been offended by "*his Spanish stateliness*"? It turned out, however, that his letters had been lying eight days at the post, as she told him, in a "most agreeable letter." He was again full of exultation. It was all settled. "My old and estimable

friend, *can I do better?* Can you suppose any woman in Britain with whom mere circumstances could unite to engage me? All objections arise from my own fault," could he humbly ask so fine a woman; etc.

Now came a slight "cool;" or the lady would not respond to the raptures of her strange lover. In his rhapsody he showed "his heart upon his sleeve." "However, I would not be too sullen in my pride; I wrote to her from Auchinleck, and *wished her joy*, etc.; she answered me, with the same ease as ever, that I had no occasion. I then wrote her a *strange Sultanish letter*, very cold and very formal, and did not go to see her for near three weeks. At last I am here, and our meeting has been such as you paint in your last but one. I have been here one night; she insisted on my staying another. If —— has been uneasy on my account, I am indeed sorry for it; I should be sorry to give any person uneasiness, far more one whose cousin and friend I shall always be." She refused sending me the lock, 'because (in the eyes of the world) it is improper;' and she says very cool things upon that head. What think you of such a return to a letter full of warmth and admiration? In short, Temple, *she is cunning*, and sees my weakness. But I now see her, and though I cannot but suffer severely, I from this moment resolve to think no more of her. I send you the copy of a note which goes to her to-morrow morning. . . . Wish me joy, my good friend, of having discovered the snake before it was too late. *I should have been ruined had I made such a woman my wife.* Luckily for me, a neighbour who came to Auchinleck last night told me that he had heard three people at Ayr agree in abusing her as a jilt. *What a risk have I run!* However, as there is still a possibility that all this may be mistake and malice, I shall behave to her in

a very respectful manner, *and shall never say a word against her* but to you. After this, I shall be upon my guard against ever indulging the least fondness for a Scots lass ; I am a soul of a more southern frame."

With all this exquisite absurdity, there are touches of nature, and good heart, and it would be hard to resist the credulous affection of the opening passages in which he pictures his friend's face as he receives the news. The truth was, his style of approaching the lady, or of managing his suit, was intolerable and maladroit. He told her that he had complained of her to his friends ; "but she did not appear in the least inclined to confess herself in the wrong." "I confess," he added naturally enough, "that, between pride and love, I was unable to speak to her but in a very awkward manner." He came away and wrote ; but was answered in very indifferent fashion : "She could not see she was to blame." "I love her, Temple, with my whole heart ; I am entirely in her power. If she writes as I can imagine, I will consecrate myself to her for ever. I must have her to learn the harpsichord and French ; she shall be one of the first women in the island. But let me take care ; I know not what is in store. Do you think it possible she can have any scheme of marrying another ?"

A new period of jealousy and uncertainty was now to follow. He met her at the concerts at Edinburgh ; went to the play with her. "It was 'Othello.' *I sat close behind the Princess, and at the most affecting scenes I pressed my hand upon her waist ; she was in tears, and rather leaned to me.* The jealous Moor described my very soul. I often spoke to her of the torment she saw before her ; still I thought her distant, and still I felt uneasy."

The truth was, the family could not "make out" the lover's uncertain, capricious behaviour; and a cousin of his flame told him seriously that he was not behaving very honourably in trying to engage the young lady's affections, while keeping himself free. An interview followed, in which he was treated coldly and with reserve. She told him she liked another gentleman. It ended by her going away for three weeks; and she said that she knew well how to amuse herself in his absence.

"Temple, *where am I now?* What is the meaning of this? I drank tea with her this afternoon, and sat near four hours with her mother and her. Our conversation turned all on the manner in which two people might live. She has the justest ideas. She said she knew me now; she could laugh me out of my ill-humour; she could give Lord Auchinleck a lesson how to manage me. Temple, what does the girl mean? . . . Come, why do I allow myself to be uneasy for a Scots lass? Rouse me, my friend! Kate has not fire enough; she does not know the value of her lover! If on her return she still remains cold, she does not deserve me. I will not quarrel with her: she cannot help her defects: but I will break my enchanting fetters. To-morrow I shall be happy *with my devotions.*"

Strange to say, after such exciting passages, the whole abruptly came to an end. In February, 1768, he wrote to his friend: "All is over between Miss Blair and me." He had discovered new rivals, as he imagined, in a young baronet—"a noble match"—and that Indian Nabob before-mentioned. He had harassed the lady with ridiculous doubts, and even struck up an alliance with the two gentlemen, to show her that "he did not care." He proposed that each should honour-

ably favour the other's suit, and, as an artful device, he wrote a *degagé* letter to her, which he got the baronet to frank for him! With extraordinary lack of gentlemanly feeling, he took the Nabob into his confidence; told him "all that had passed between her and me;" spoke of her "wary mother;" quoted Dempster's humorous saying, that her family and friends "were in a confederacy to lay hold of every man with £1000 a year." "I called it," said the foolish Bozzy, "*salmon fishing.*" No doubt all this was repeated. He then went to her, and offered to try and make himself "as agreeable to her as possible; that is, if he had any chance." She told him bluntly he need not take the trouble; "so I think I had enough." He consoled himself by writing doggerel verses on her.

"A CRAMBO SONG ON LOSING MY MISTRESS.

"Although I be an honest laird,
In person rather strong and brawny,
For me the heiress never cared,
For she would have the knight, Sir Sawney.

"And when, with ardent vows, I swore
Loud as Sir Jonathan Trelawny,
The heiress showed me to the door,
And said she'd have the knight, Sir Sawney.

"She told me, with a scornful look,
I was as ugly as a tawney,
For she a better fish could hook,
The rich and gallant knight, Sir Sawney."

It seems scarcely credible that at this crisis of his dismissal he should have turned to supply the vacancy with an old flame of Dutch extraction, whom he had met at Utrecht, but had not seen for many years. This was the Dutch "Zelide." "You say well, that I find mistresses wherever I am; but I am a sad dupe—a perfect Don Quixote. To return to where it winces:

might I not tell my charmer that really I am an inconstant being, but I cannot help it? or may I let my love gradually decay? Had she never loved before, I would have lost every drop of my blood rather than give her up. . . . My father is quite against the scheme, so you need not be afraid. Indeed I should not engage in matrimonial concerns without your approbation. . . . Zelide may have had her faults, but is she always to have them? may not time have altered her for the better, as it has altered me? But you will tell me that I am not so greatly altered, as I have still many unruly passions. To confess to you at once, Temple, I have, since my last coming to town, been as wild as ever."

He then once more reverted to Miss Blair: "Though, now that all is over, I see many faults which I did not see before. Do you not think she has not feeling enough, nor that ingenuous spirit which your friend requires? The Nabob and many other people are still of opinion that she has not made sure of Sir Sawney, and that all this may be *finesse*. . . . *I am, however, resolved to look out for a good wife, either here or in England—a Howard, or some other of the noblest in the kingdom.*" Such was this record of love and absurdity, in which the hero was certainly unlucky.

Boswell, after much wearying out his father with his importunities, and his longings to set off in hot haste for Utrecht, was now to discover that Mdlle. de Zuyl was, like Miss Blair, not at all the person suited to him. The process by which he arrived at this conclusion was thus amusingly revealed. He was really eager to break off, for he discovered serious faults and blemishes in her —"levity, and infidel notions,"—and wrote to hope she was "altered for the better." "Is she not a termagant, or at least will she not be one by the time she is forty?

and she is near thirty now. . . . I was afraid that my father, out of his great indulgence, might have consented to my going to Utrecht. . . . 'How happy am I at having a friend at home of such wisdom and firmness. I was eager for the Guards, I was eager for mademoiselle; but you have happily restrained me from both. . . . I shall henceforth do nothing without your advice. Worthy man! this will be a solace to him upon his circuit."

CHAPTER XII.

ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED.

1769.

But not three months passed before we find our hero again engrossed by a new passion! English, Scotch, and Dutch belles had unsuccessfully passed by him; an Irish one now appeared on the scene.

"I am exceedingly lucky having escaped the insensible Miss Blair and the furious Zelide, for I have now seen the finest creature that ever was formed, *la belle Irlandaise*. Figure to yourself, Temple, a young lady just sixteen, formed like a Grecian nymph, with the sweetest countenance, full of sensibility, accomplished, with a Dublin education, always half the year in the north of Ireland, her father a counsellor-at-law, with an estate of £1000 a year, and above £10,000 in ready money; her mother a sensible, well-bred woman; she the darling of her parents, and no other child but her sister. She is cousin to some cousins of mine in this county. I was at their house while she and her father and mother and aunt were over upon a visit just last week. The counsellor is as worthy a gentleman as ever I saw. Your friend is a favourite with all of them. From morning to night I admired the charming Mary Anne. Upon my honour, I never was so much in love; I never

was before in a situation to which there was not some objection, but *here every flower is united*, and not a thorn to be found. But how shall I manage it? they were in a hurry, and are gone home to Ireland. They were sorry they could not come to see Auchinleck, of which they had heard a great deal. *Mary Anne wished much to be in the grotto.* I received the kindest invitation to come and see them in Ireland, and I promised to be there in March. What a fortunate fellow am I! what a variety of adventures in all countries! I was allowed to walk a great deal with Miss ——; I repeated my fervent passion to her again and again; she was pleased, and I could swear that her little heart beat. I carved the first letter of her name on a tree; I cut off a lock of her hair, *malé pertinax.* She promised not to forget me, nor to marry a lord before March. Her aunt said to me, 'Mr. Boswell, I tell you seriously there will be no fear of this succeeding but from your own inconstancy; stay till March.' All the Scotch cousins too think I may be the happy man. Ah, my friend, I am now as I ought to be; no reserved, prudent conduct, as with Miss B. No! all youthful, warm, natural; in short, all genuine love. Pray tell me what you think. I have great confidence in your judgment. I mean not to ask what you think of my angelic girl; I am fixed beyond a possibility of doubt as to her."

The lover was now confiding to his intimate friend that this was the most agreeable passion he "ever felt." Before he left London he went into St. Paul's Cathedral, and "made a vow" that he would not allow himself "licentious connections of any kind *for six months.* I have *hitherto* kept firm to my vow, and already feel myself a superior being." This making of vows, praying for the dead, and belief in the Real Presence, were

remnants of his Catholic leanings, and clung to him through life.

Being now invited to Ireland by the family of his charmer, to stay with them, he was eager to set off at once. But suddenly Miss Blair re-appears, and he had now the mortification of learning that it was his own folly that had frustrated his efforts.

"What think you, my friend? Miss Blair is Miss Blair still! Her marriage with the Knight is not to be. After the departure of my 'belle Irlandaise,' I was two or three times at Adamtown, and, upon my word, the old flame was kindled. The wary mother, as you called her, told me that it was my own fault that her daughter was not long ago my wife; but that after the young lady had shown me very particular marks of regard, *corresponded with me, etc., I had made such a joke of my love for the heiress in every company*, that she was piqued, and did not believe that I had any serious intentions; that in the meantime the Knight offered, and what could she do? Temple, to a man again in love, this was engaging. I walked whole hours with the Princess; I kneeled; I became truly amorous, but she told me that 'really she had a very great regard for me, but did not like me so as to marry me.' You never saw such a coldness. . . . She might have had me, *but, luckily for me,* she still affected the same coldness, and not a line would she write. Then came a kind letter from my amiable aunt Boyd in Ireland, and all the charms of sweet Mary Anne revived. Since that time I have been quite constant to her, and as indifferent towards Kate as if I never had thought of her. She is still in the country. Should I write to her, and tell her I am cured, as she wished? By all that's enchanting, I go to Ireland in March. What should I say to Kate?

You see, I am still the old man: I have still need of your advice: write me without delay. I shall soon give you a more general epistle."

There has been some speculation as to the name of this young lady, who had so nearly fixed the affections of Mr. Boswell. From Boswell's allusion to "my aunt Boyd," Boyd is not unlikely to have been her name. In response to this good-natured invitation, Mr. Boswell, in 1769, set off on his Irish excursion. Later he often tried to allure his great friend to that country who, however, would protest that though Dublin might be worth seeing, it was not "worth going to see." Not long before his death, Boswell recalled fondly the pleasures of Dublin, and declared, to his friend Malone there, that he thought "he should enjoy their dinner-parties much." His companion on this Hibernian expedition was his cousin, Miss Peggie Montgomerie, who, we must presume, was accompanied by some *chaperon*. This young lady had "numerous and respectable relations" in that country, who "showed him every attention," "the brave Captain Macbride," afterwards Admiral, and others, connected with the Dundonald family, a member of which house had married "Robert Sibthorpe, Esq., a person of importance in the County of Down, which brought him into further notice." Some seven weeks were spent merrily enough. The Lord Lieutenant, Lord Townsend, paid him many attentions; "for," as he naively tells us, "*the congeniality of their dispositions* united them in the most pleasant manner." Lord Charlemont, Dr. Leland, Mr. Flood, and George Faulkiner, the eccentric printer, all contributed to his happiness." He missed no opportunity of making or finding friends. Even at Drogheda, he met a cousin, Colonel Graham of the Royal Highlanders. The *Public*

Advertiser informed its readers, on the 7th of July, that "James Boswell, Esq., having now visited Ireland, he dined with his Grace the Duke of Leinster at his seat at Carton; he went also by special invitation to meet the Lord Lieutenant at his country seat at Leixlip, to which he was conducted, in one of his Excellency's coaches, by Lieut.-Colonel Walshe. He dined there and stayed all night, and next morning came in the coach with his Excellency to the Phœnix Park, and was present at a review of Sir Joseph Yorke's dragoons. He also dined with the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor. He is now set out on his return to Scotland." In Ireland he remained six weeks in all. And among other acquaintances he had been introduced to the eccentric Bishop of Derry, with whom he was later to have a little controversy.

But in all this junketing we find no mention of his Irish "flame;" and, indeed, he seemed to pass most of his time away from the County Down. "Mary Anne" may have actually rejected him: and in his mortification he may have found comfort in another quarter. At any rate a surprise is now to follow.

As we have said, he was accompanied on this expedition by his cousin, Miss Margaret, or "Peggy," Montgomerie, who was the confidante of his feelings. She had witnessed the termination of his last attachment, and soothed his mortification. The piqued Boswell, as so often happens in such cases, turned his thoughts to his comforter, in whom he began to see actual charms, and, in disgust at his numerous casualties in the court of love, he suddenly plunged into matrimony. This lady was "the daughter of David Montgomerie, Esq., of Lanislaw, and representative of the peerage of Lyle." She was also connected with Lord Eglinton. As he tells us

himself, with an extraordinary candour, in his "Memoir," "They had lived from their earliest years in the most unreserved and intimate friendship: his love of the fair sex was ever unbounded, and she was a constant yet prudent and delicate confidante"—an odd compliment!—"of all his *égarements du cœur;* so, with a frankness of character for which she was ever remarkable, she accepted the offer, and this, Mr. Boswell has ever been heard to say, was the most fortunate circumstance in his life. This jaunt was the occasion of his carrying himself into that connection to which he had always declared himself averse. He requested that she would do him the favour to accept him with all his faults, with which he was imperfectly acquainted; and though he had uniformly protested that a large fortune was an indispensable requisite, he was willing to waive that in consideration of her peculiar merit." This revelation was made after her death. Accidentally it turned out an admirable choice; for her practical and unsympathetic disposition was exactly fitted to keep his erratic temper under control.

During the interval between his engagement and his marriage, Mr. Boswell was to make a grotesque exhibition, at the Shakespeare Jubilee, held at Stratford-on-Avon. It must be remembered that this raree-show was in itself an absurd performance enough, and it has always seemed a matter of astonishment that so shrewd and sensible a person as Garrick should not merely have organized, but have figured so conspicuously in, the performance. There was nothing in the exhibition that had any particular connection with Boswell; but it is not difficult to discover the motive that prompted him to take part in the business. Perhaps it was that he was in possession of a showy fancy dress which he was

longing to exhibit—that of a Corsican native: he had lately come from Corsica; his travels and discoveries were in the newspapers; and he thought that at Stratford he was sure to be pointed out as "the distinguished Mr. Boswell." Many people have known some feather-headed friend whom a possession of a rich fancy dress has thus seduced into long journeys for the sole purpose of exhibiting himself.

The incidents of this theatrical solemnity, in which there was no little genuine feeling for Shakespeare, have been often recounted. The shocking weather and the rain destroyed all the effect of the attempted festivities. The wooden pavilion erected for the occasion was completely flooded. Under such difficulties the carnival took place, the water almost cutting off all approach to the rooms. Our hero described all the proceedings in a very graphic and vivacious account, which he furnished to the *London Magazine*, and in which, as may be imagined, the figure of Mr. Boswell was pretty conspicuous. Every word of it is characteristic; and it is pleasant reading from the naive, natural way in which the writer communicates his impressions.

"Allow me," he says, "amongst many others, to describe Shakespeare's Jubilee at Stratford-on-Avon. For my own part I am now returned to London, and I flatter myself that, after being agitated as much as anybody, I have recovered my tranquillity and am in a condition to give you a few remarks on this celebrated jubilee of genius, which, I am persuaded, will engage the attention, not only of all ranks of this island, but of the learned and ingenious in every part of Europe. My bosom glowed with joy when I beheld a numerous and splendid company of nobility and gentry, the rich, the brave, the witty and the fair, assembled to pay their

tribute to Shakespeare. Let conceited and disappointed authors and players vent their spleen against him, he may assure himself that his fame will last for ever." This was a thrust at Foote, whom he certainly disliked, and who, in a rather malignant fashion, went about sneering at the projector and all his proceedings.

"The morning of the first day," he goes on, "was ushered in with a pleasing serenade by the best musicians from London, in disguise. The jubilee began with an oratorio in the great church at Stratford; the subject the story of Judith, the words by Mr. Bickerstaff, the music by Dr. Arne. It was a grand and admirable performance. But I could have wished that prayers had been read and a short sermon preached. It would have consecrated our jubilee to begin it with devotion, with gratefully adoring the Supreme Father of all spirits, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift. The procession with music from the church to the amphitheatre, led on by Mr. Garrick, had a very good effect. The amphitheatre was a wooden building, erected just on the brink of the Avon, in the form of an octagon, with eight pillars supporting the roof. It was elegantly painted and gilded. Between the pillars were crimson curtains, very well arranged, and hanging over each recess. In this amphitheatre was a large orchestra, placed as it used to be formerly in Ranelagh. Here the company dined exceedingly well, between three and four. Between five and six the musical performers appeared, and entertained us with several of the songs in 'Shakespeare's Garland,' composed for the occasion. Towards the end of the jubilee many of us were not in very good humour, as many inconveniences occurred. *I laughed away my spleen by a droll simile.* Taking the whole of this jubilee, I must be forgiven for observing

that this exhibition looked so like a trap laid on purpose that it displeased me, and I was angry to find any notice taken of the venomous insects who have shot their stings in the newspapers, particularly against Mr. Garrick. It had the appearance of a soreness unworthy of our Lord High Steward. If the gnats at any time slightly pierce his skin, let him drop a little of the oil of good humour upon the place and give himself no further trouble. *This is my receipt, founded upon experience.* Said I, 'It is like eating an artichoke entire. We have some fine mouthfuls, but also swallow the leaves and hair, which are confoundedly difficult of digestion.' After all, however, I am highly satisfied with my artichoke." He then gave, or suggested some personal sketch of himself, his dress and behaviour, which is truly grotesque. "One of the most remarkable masks upon the occasion was James Boswell, Esq., in the dress of an armed Corsican chief. He entered the amphitheatre about twelve o'clock; he wore a short dark-coloured coat of coarse cloth, scarlet waistcoat, breeches, and black spatterdashes; his cap or bonnet was of black cloth; on the front of it was embroidered in gold letters, 'Viva la Libertà,' and on one side of it was a handsome blue feather and cockade, so that it had an elegant as well as a warlike appearance. On the breast of his coat was sewed a Moore's head, the crest of Corsica, surrounded with branches of laurel; he had also a cartridge-pouch, into which was stuck a stiletto, and on his left side a pistol was hung upon the belt of his cartridge-pouch. He had a fusee slung across his shoulder, wore no powder in his hair, but had it plaited at its full length, with a knot of blue ribbons at the end of it. He had, by way of staff, a very curious vine, all of one piece, with a bird finely carved upon it,

emblematical of the sweet bard of Avon. He wore no mask, saying that it was not proper for a gallant Corsican. So soon as he came into the room, *he drew universal attention.* The novelty of the Corsican dress, its becoming appearance, and the character of the brave nation, concurred to distinguish the armed Corsican chief. He was first accosted by Mr. Garrick, with whom he had a good deal of conversation. There was a warm discussion between Lord Grosvenor, in the character of a Turk, and the Corsican, on the different constitution of the countries so opposite to each other,—Despotism and Liberty; and Captain Thomson, of the navy, in the character of an honest tar, kept it up very well; he expressed a strong inclination to stand by the brave islanders. Mr. Boswell danced both a minuet and country-dance *with a very pretty Irish lady,* Mrs. Sheldon, wife to Captain Sheldon of the 38th Foot (Lord Blaney's); she was dressed in a genteel domino, and before she danced threw off her mask. Mr. Boswell having come to the jubilee to contribute his share towards what he called a classical institution in honour of Shakespeare, being also desirous of paying compliment to Mr. Garrick, with whom he has always been on a most agreeable footing, and never unmindful of the cause which he has espoused, he wrote the following verses, which, it is thought, are well suited to the occasion, while, at the same time, they preserved the true Corsican character."

His picture as an "armed Corsican" was added.

CHAPTER XIII.

MRS. BOSWELL—MARRIED LIFE—LEGAL CONNECTIONS.

1769.

AFTER this exhibition, Boswell had now to think seriously of his impending marriage, which, however, did not take place until the November of 1769, when it was thus announced—

"*November* 25. *At Lanislaw, in the Shire of Ayr, James Boswell, Esqre., of Auchinleck, Advocate, to Miss Peggy Montgomery, daughter of the late David Montgomery, of Lanislaw, Esqre.*"

It was certainly a rather hasty and improvident step; the lady had no fortune, and, her father being dead some time, she was not likely to obtain one. It was also highly displeasing to Boswell's father, as we find from a very marked, and rather original step, he took to show his displeasure. His wife, as we have seen, had died some years before, and he now arranged a second marriage, selecting the very day of his son's for the occasion. And so we read: "November 25, 1769, at Edinburgh, Alexander Boswell, Esqre., of Auchinleck, one of the Lords of Session and Justices, to Miss Betty Boswell, second daughter of John Boswell, of Balmuto, deceased." He had determined not to appear at his son's wedding, and took this mode of furnishing the reason.

Mrs. Boswell figures in her husband's chronicle as a lady of rather tart disposition, who made herself disagreeable to the great sage. But she was sorely tried by her husband's follies, his love of the bottle, and of the other sex; by his wasteful extravagance, and his constant expeditions to London, where he could indulge his tastes uncontrolled. Mr. Boswell was attached to her after his fashion, but stood much in awe of her. Baretti, in his rude "Marginalia," wrote: "I am told Boswell's wife is a coarse sort of woman." Her behaviour to Johnson, whom she caused to feel that he was an intruding guest, shows this plainly. She had, however, a sort of native bluntness, and her husband has recorded several of her smart things and *bon mots*, as he calls them. "Boswell, speaking of a horse, said he was a horse of blood. She answered readily, 'I hope so, for I am sure he has *no flesh*.'" He tells us that "she recommended reading the 'Arabian Nights Entertainments' to one in bad health and low spirits; 'not,' said she, 'to be taken into the mind, but to keep out disturbing thoughts; let them be like a sentry, whom we do not admit into the chamber of a sick person, but place at the door to prevent noisy intruders.' She disapproved of my inviting Mr. M——sh, a man of ability but of violent manners, to make one in a genteel party at our house one evening. 'He is,' said she, 'like fire and water, useful, but not to be brought into company.' Dr. Grant asked if Mr. Macadam of Craigengellan had but one daughter. I said he had properly speaking but one—one beautiful daughter, the other poor girl was very ugly. My wife said that it was hard that want of good looks should make her not be reckoned his daughter; she was more a daughter on that account, as being more likely to continue with him." And what

a capital contrast, too, of character in the following! "When I was warm, *telling of my own consequence and generosity*, my wife made some cool humbling remarks upon me. I flew into a violent passion; I said, 'If you throw cold water on a plate of iron much heated it will burst into shivers.'" Mr. Boswell figures rather trivially in the next incident: "My wife was angry at a silk cloak for Veronica being ill-made, and said it could not be *altered*. 'Then,' said I, 'it must be a *Persian* cloak,' alluding to the silk called Persian and the unalterable *Persian* laws. . . . My wife said it would be much better to give salaries to members of Parliament than to let them try what they can get off their country by places and pensions. Said she, 'They are like ostlers and postillions, who have no wages, and must support themselves by vails.'" Her most famous *mot*, however, was that "she had often heard of a bear being led by a man, but never till now of a man *being led by a bear*." And this Mr. Boswell, with courageous insensibility, relates to his readers! But another family scene shows the same contrast between absurdity and good sense. A discussion arose between Dr. Webster and Boswell as to the propriety of visiting a person who had married a low man, the doctor urging that the best way to get the better of them was to treat them with cold civility. "'But,' exclaimed Mr. Boswell, 'I don't want to get the better of them, I want to get rid of them: you may get the better of a sow by going into the mire *and boxing it*; but who would do it?' My wife, who wanted to support Dr. Webster, *though she had not much attended to the dispute*, said something which was of pretty much the same import with my remarks. 'Well,' said I, 'this is good enough. She thinks she is opposing me, and yet she agrees with me; she thinks she is riding a race

with me and getting the better, and all the time she is behind me.'"

"When admiring the magnificence at Keddlestone, Lord Scarsdale's mansion, and all its treasures, Johnson remarked, 'all this excludes but one evil—poverty.' When I mentioned Dr. Johnson's remark to a lady of admirable good sense and quickness of understanding, she observed, 'It is true, but how much good does it let in?' To this observation much praise has been justly given." This wise and happy comment was Mrs. Boswell's; and it was with equal pride and affection that he could not resist adding this passage in his second edition: "Let me, then, do myself the honour to mention that the lady who made it was the late Margaret Montgomerie, my very valuable wife, and the very affectionate mother of my children, who, if they inherit her good qualities, have no reason to complain of their lot." *

James' Court, where Boswell resided in Edinburgh, had been the mansion of his friend David Hume, whose tenant he became.† Here he remained a couple of years. "Entering a low gateway, which pierces the line of lofty houses along the Lawnmarket, one finds one's-self in a square court, surrounded by houses which have

* Such changes and little touchings as these make the comparison of the different editions very interesting as a study of Boswell's character; and it was with this view that I ventured to re-issue the first edition with all these additions and alterations marked.

† A builder once brought an action for repairs against Hume, a note of which is among the manuscripts of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. "At Whitsuntide last, Mr. Boswell, Advocate, left Mr. Hume's house near James' Court, and Lady Wallace came to it. Mrs. Boswell at the time sent for one Adam Gillies, mason, to repair some plaister which was broken. On this opening he pretended that other repairs were wanting, telling Mr. Hume that Lady Wallace insisted on them" ("Life of Hume," John Hill Burton, ii. 138).

now evidently fallen to the lot of humbler inhabitants than those for whom they were erected. . . . Entering one of the doors opposite the main entrance, the stranger is sometimes led by a friend, wishing to offer him an agreeable surprise, down flight after flight of the steps of a stone staircase, where he imagines he is descending so far into the bowels of the earth, but emerges on the edge of a cheerful thoroughfare. When he looks up to the building through which he has descended, he sees the vast pile of tall houses standing at the head of the mound which creates astonishment in every visitor to Edinburgh." A passage in a letter of Johnson's to Mrs. Thrale supports this description: "Boswell has very handsome and spacious rooms, level with the ground on one side."*

Unfortunately Boswell had "expressed his extreme aversion" to his father's second marriage, without reserve, an imprudence he later had to acknowledge. But this conduct was not forgiven by his father or by his new mother. "*The woman is very implacable*, and I imagine it is hardly possible that she can ever be my friend; she, however, behaves much better to the children than their grandfather does. We are all to dine at my father's to-day. He is better now than he has been for several years." †

* This James' Court was near "the head of the earthen mound." Dr. Hill Burton—according to the well-informed Chambers—is mistaken in supposing that, at the time of Johnson's visit, Boswell occupied Hume's chambers on the third floor. He had removed to a larger suite on a level with the court below, and which, in the year 1846, were the printing-offices of Messrs. Pillans. This is proved by Johnson's description of them, as "very handsome and spacious rooms, level with the ground on one side, and on the other four storeys high," whereas Hume's apartments were in the eastern portion of the third floor.

† Even some years later, in 1775, Mr. Boswell gave a most unpleasant sketch of his disagreeable step-mother. It has, however,

This folly of the improvident marriage, the quarrel with his father for what he deemed *his* improvidence, increased by the difficulties of his father's temper, were to have long and lasting results. The judge, however, behaved with liberality. "It must be acknowledged," his son tells us, "that his paying £1000 of my debt some years ago was a large bounty. He allows me £300 a year. But I find that what I gain by my practice, and that sum together, will not support my family. I am in hopes that my father will augment my allowance to £400 a year." Nor was Boswell likely to smooth away these angry feelings, being always inclined to argue and contradict. As Mr. Ramsay said, the judge's declining years were embittered by these obtrusive follies of his son; and, above all, by his complete and steadily continued failure in the serious business of life. Their relations, as may be imagined, continued to be of the most disagreeable kind; and the son, being dependent on his father for supplies, compelled himself, ruefully enough, to endure a periodical residence at Auchinleck, where he had to make himself agreeable, particularly to the severe lady who now ruled there. Even after six or seven years matters had not improved.

"My father is most unhappily dissatisfied with me. My wife and I dined with him on Saturday; he did not salute her, though he had not seen her for three months; nor did he so much as ask her how she did, though she is advanced in pregnancy. *He harps on my going over Scotland with a brute* (think how shockingly erroneous!),

an air of truth. "His wife, whom in my conscience I cannot condemn for any capital bad quality, is so narrow-minded and, I don't know how, so set upon keeping him under her own management, and so suspicious, and so sourishly tempered that it requires the utmost exertion of practical philosophy to keep myself quiet."

and wandering (or some such phrase) to London. In vain do I defend myself: even the circumstance that my last jaunt to London did not cost me £20—as I got forty-two guineas in London—does not affect him. *I always dread his making some bad settlement.*"

Being now married and *rangé*, it might have been expected that he would set himself soberly to follow his profession, and discard those pursuits which were incompatible with study and decorum. Instead, we find him engrossed with pleasures and distractions of all kinds. He had always a strange taste for the company of persons whose lives were of an erratic or perhaps loose caste; and for adventurers, male or female, he had a particular penchant. Wilkes, Hume, Rousseau, Mrs. Rudd, Derrick were curious, but scarcely improving company. To this class belonged an actor, with an odd history, who was then at Edinburgh, David Ross by name.*

* This person, as the amusing and well-informed John Taylor tells us, "was related to an ancient family in Scotland, at the head of whom, in his time, was Sir Walter Ross. He had the reputation of being a good actor in tragedy, and in both the lively and graver parts of comedy. He was Master of the Revels in Scotland, and was very fond of the pleasures of the table. He ate himself into so unseemly a shape, that he could not procure a situation on the London boards. His wife was the celebrated Fanny Murray. She was certainly not a suitable companion for Ross, whose conversation more resembled the dialogue of Congreve's wits than that of any other person I ever knew. He also excelled in telling a humorous story." On his deathbed, Dr. Rogers tells us, his father made a will, excluding him from any share of his property, and cruelly stipulating that his sister "should pay him one shilling annually on the first day of May, his birthday, to remind him of his misfortune in being born"! On the plea that, by the law of Scotland, a person could not bequeath an estate by mere words of exclusion without an express conveyance of inheritance, Ross obtained a reduction of the settlement, and on a decision by the House of Lords got possession of six thousand pounds. He now retired from the Edinburgh theatre, and renewed his engagements

With this odd character we find Boswell associated on the most intimate terms. "In the following winter," he tells us, "Mr. Boswell, ever ready to take the part of the injured, was (though personally unknown to him) solicited by the late David Ross, Esq., to favour him with a prologue for the opening a Theatre Royal at Edinburgh, for which Mr. Ross had obtained his Majesty's patent, but found a violent and oppressive party formed in opposition to him."

The theatre had been destroyed not long before, owing to a riot. Mr. Boswell's prologue was as follows—

"SCOTLAND, for learning and for arms renown'd,
In ancient annals is with lustre crown'd;
And still she shares whate'er the world can yield
Of letter'd fame, or glory in the field.
In every distant land Great Britain knows
The Thistle springs promiscuous with the Rose.

"While in all points with other lands she vied,
The stage alone to Scotland was denied;
Mistaken Zeal, in times of darkness bred,
O'er the best minds its gloomy vapours spread;
Taste and Religion were supposed at strife;
And 'twas a sin—to view this glass of life!

"When the Muse ventur'd the ungracious task
To play elusive with unlicens'd mask,
Mirth was restrain'd by statutory awe,
And tragick greatness fear'd the scourge of law.
Illustrious heroes arrant *vagrants* seem'd,
And gentlest nymphs were *sturdy beggars* deem'd.

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at Covent Garden; but he soon became a victim to reckless improvidence. He died in September, 1790.

"My old friend Ross, the player," wrote Boswell, "died suddenly yesterday morning. I was sent for, as his most particular friend in town, and have been so busy in arranging his funeral, at which I am to be chief mourner, that I have left myself very little time—only about ten minutes. Poor Ross! he was an unfortunate man in some respects; but he was a true *bon vivant*, a most social man, and never was without good eating and drinking, and hearty companions. He had schoolfellows and friends, who stood by him wonderfully. I have discovered that Admiral Barrington once sent him £100, and allowed him an annuity of £60 a year."

"This night lov'd GEORGE's free enlighten'd age
Bids ROYAL FAVOUR shield the Scottish stage;
His Royal Favour every bosom cheers;
The drama now with dignity appears!
Hard is my fate, if murmurings there be
Because that favour is announc'd by me.

"Anxious, alarm'd, and aw'd by every frown,
May I entreat the candour of the TOWN:
You see me here by no unworthy art;
My ALL I venture where I've fix'd my heart.
Fondly ambitious of an honest fame,
My humble labours your indulgence claim;
I wish to hold no RIGHT but by YOUR *choice*;
I'll trust my *patent* to the PUBLICK VOICE."

We are further told that "one of Mr. Ross's great patrons, the Earl of Mansfield, well characterized it as 'a very good copy of verses, very conciliating.'" *

The actor himself delivered the lines, and Mr. Boswell oddly adds that the applause was secured at the proper places by having persons judiciously dispersed about the theatre. "The effect upon the audience was highly flattering to the author, and beneficial to the manager; as it secured to the latter, by the annihilation of the opposition, which had been till that time too successfully exerted against him, the uninterrupted possession of his patent, which he enjoyed till his death, which happened in September, 1790. Mr. Boswell attended his funeral *as chief mourner*, and paid the last honours to a man with whom he had spent many a pleasant hour."

In the dispute about the Edinburgh Theatre, Boswell was the player's counsel, though the remuneration he

* Boswell was not satisfied with the printed report of his prologue, and wrote to the *Public Advertiser* on June 12, 1768:

"SIR,—I observed in your paper a very incorrect copy of a prologue which was spoken at the opening of our Theatre Royal. As I know you are ready to oblige your old correspondents, I doubt not but you will do me the favour to insert a genuine copy."

received was not a very substantial one. "His spouse, the celebrated Fanny Murray, made me a present of some very pretty straw mats for setting dishes on. Lord Auchinleck observed to me, 'Well, James, she cannot say that, then, she does not value your advice a *straw*.'"

Indeed, like many of his cheerful contemporaries, Boswell took much interest in the stage, and was acquainted with many actors. His regard for Garrick, and the enthusiasm of the Shakespeare Jubilee in 1769, prompted him to write some essays on "The Profession of a Player," in the *London Magazine*, a journal in which he had a pecuniary interest. These trifles, though not going very deep into the subject, show his usual clear good sense, and are written in an agreeable, unpretending style. Some of his ideas at least prompt further speculation. Thus he discusses the relations between the actor and his character, and the qualifications requisite on the stage. Having the instance of Garrick before him, on whom he lavishes many compliments, he points out "that more genius, knowledge, and general accomplishments were required in the player than in any other profession, and that he should know, like the physician or lawyer, what he purposes to do. Though it may be objected that there are many ignorant players, brought from the dregs of the populace, who set their audiences in a roar; but their knowledge, and a great variety of it, too, can be picked up in the ordinary practice of life."

He then discusses the interesting question which was dealt with so acutely by Diderot, in his famous essay,* viz. What should be the relation between the

* Lately republished by my friend, Mr. Walter Pollock, with pleasant and original introduction by Mr. Irving.

player and the part he assumes? A player, he holds, should in a certain sense be the character he represents. "I remember to have heard the most illustrious author of the age, whose conversation is thought by many to excel his writings, exert his eloquence against this proposition, and, with that humour for which he is distinguished, render it exceedingly ridiculous. 'If, sir,' he said, 'Garrick believes himself to be every character that he represents, he is a mad-man, and ought to be confined. Nay, sir, he is a villain, and ought to be hanged. If, for instance, he believes himself to be Macbeth, he has committed murder; he is a vile assassin if he has really been that person in his own mind, he has in his own mind been as guilty as Macbeth.'"

He then explains his own view in the following sensible words: "My notion is, the player must have a kind of double feeling, assume the character and retain the consciousness of his own." This is followed by some general remarks, which show the observation of a man who knows the world, and who is accustomed to society. It makes us wonder once more how one with such sagacity could be guilty of so many social absurdities. "Were nothing but the real character to appear, society would not be half so safe and agreeable as we find it. We adopt for our ease feelings suitable to every occasion, and so, like the players, are to a certain degree 'different characters from our own.' The greater degree to which a man is accustomed to assume an artificial feeling, the more probability there is that he has no character of his own on which we can depend. Hence the French, who are celebrated as the politest people in Europe, are perpetual comedians. Players, one should think, must be very entertaining companions. They have had the advantage of seeing a great deal of life, as it is their

business to exhibit various scenes of human life, their memories stored with tales of every sort, with innumerable characters, etc. Accordingly the conversation of many of them has been acknowledged by the best judges to be very agreeable.

"Some players, indeed, like some other men of genius, will be found dull companions enough till put in agitation, like some race-horses who are restive and good for nothing till warmed by velocity of motion." He thus concludes with this curious speculation: "There is something very curious and interesting in considering that players who have entertained us so much must at last die like other men. How curious is it to think that they who have so often counterfeited death, and again appeared in all the lively activity and cheerfulness of life, must at last arrive at that awful scene when life is to be no more; when those features which have been so often employed to express the varieties of human passions and emotions must be convulsed with the agonies of dissolution; when their organs of speech, which have touched so many hearts, must for ever be dumb; when those who have animated such a multiplicity of characters must sink into cold insensibility. I question if in that awful scene any player ever was able to exert his talents."

These are sensible and thoughtful observations, and show that Boswell could be a judicious critic.

CHAPTER XIV.

WORK AT THE BAR—THE LITERARY CLUB.

1771.

THESE and other occupations seem to have reconciled Boswell to his lot. He was satisfied with his lady, though he suffered from his usual affliction. "You cannot say too much to me of my wife. How dare you quote to me *sua si bona norint!* I am fully sensible of my happiness in being married to so excellent a woman, so sensible a mistress of a family, so agreeable a companion, so affectionate and peculiarly proper helpmate for me. I own I am not so much on my guard against fits of passion or gloom as I ought to be, but that is really owing to her great goodness. There is something childish in it, I confess: I ought not to indulge in such fits."

In the September of 1770, his first child was born—a son: but it only lived two hours. The father indulged himself in some philosophical fancies on his loss, owning that he ought not to mourn for what he had not had time to appreciate.

He was now applying seriously to business, and wrote a flourishing account to his friend of his increasing employment at the Bar. "I do not say that neither Mr. Yorke nor Mr. Norton can be busier than I shall

be the week that my father sits as Judge in the Outer House; for you must know that the absurdity of mankind makes nineteen out of twenty employ the son of the Judge before whom their cause is heard; and you must take it along with you that I am as yet but a very raw counsellor, so that a moderate share of business is really a load to me. I have now cleared eighty guineas. My clerk comes to me every morning at six, and I have dictated to him forty folio pages in one day. I am doing nobly; but I have not leisure for learning. It is very odd that I can labour so hard at law, when I am so indolent in other things." * He was also obtaining some employment in local ecclesiastical cases, though he declared he had great disgust to that line of business. No doubt, he was not likely to be acceptable to the grim fathers of the Assembly. †

* Boswell united hard work with a flippancy, quite out of season, and which could not have recommended him to the "writers."

Thus: "In 1774 there came on before the Court of Session a cause at the instance of a *black* for having it declared that he was free. I was one of the counsel. We took no fees; and I said I knew one thing, that it was a Guinea *black*."

He made no secret of his dislike to the Scotch legal system, and was always extolling that of the English. "One day, when causes were called in the Inner House in an irregular manner, and not according to the roll, I said to Crosbie, 'The English courts run straight out like a fox; ours double like a hare.'"

He also favoured appeals to the Lords—no doubt because they brought him to town. "It's a good thing for Scotland that we can appeal to the House of Lords. I look upon that court, the House of Lords, as a great rolling stone, which by going over a cause effectually smooths it at once, when our fifteen lords, who have been breaking the clods with their mallets for a long time, may have left some parts rough; or sometimes may have found large masses which they have not been able to break at all."

† He gives this little sketch of himself in his relations with these persons. "On the 2nd December, 1782, I went to dine at Walker's tavern with a committee of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, who were taking evidence in a criminal process. The agent for the

It will be interesting to follow him into court, as it were, and see him in one important ecclesiastical case which was now attracting attention.

In one of his conversations with his Mentor, Boswell alludes to some writings of his on the Kirk of Scotland, and which hitherto have escaped notice. As I have said, he got employed in the various causes that came before the General Assembly, though he confessed he detested this sort of employment. One of these, relating to the appointment of a Minister to a cure, caused much debate. It came before the Assembly in 1771–2, and the point in question was thus explained by Boswell.

David Thomson having received a presentation to be Minister at St. Ninian's, a great number of people opposed his settlement, and on various pleas staved off on various occasions a decision for no less than five years. The presbytery of Stirling had refused to *transport*, i.e. translate him from Gargamock to St. Ninian's, and an appeal was brought to the Assembly.

"The counsel for the patron were Sir John Dalrymple, Mr. Bannatyne Macleod, and *Mr. James Boswell:* the counsel for the people was 'the Hon. Mr. Henry Erskine, brother to the Earl of Buchan.'"

Boswell did not content himself with professional service, but contributed to the *London Magazine* vivacious sketches of the speakers quite worthy of the

heritors was the entertainer. I was asked to take the head of the table thus:—'Mr. Boswell, you'll take this end.' 'No,' said I, 'the Moderator will sit there.' 'Then you'll take this end,' the foot of the table. 'No,' said I, pointing to the agent. I placed myself about the middle of the table, and said, 'I have no end in view but a good dinner.' Said the Rev. Mr. Brown of Edinburgh, 'The end is lawful if the means be good.'" Mr. Boswell's "court jokes" were flat enough; such as that on the macer, who was so hoarse that he could scarcely be heard when he called the causes. "I said he had no voice but at an election."

new journalism of our day.* He then "touches off" the Rev. Dr. Webster at Edinburgh, "celebrated for his copious eloquence, for his quaintness of repartee, and for his abilities in calculation, . . . and the Rev. Mr. Fairbairn at Dumbarton,—who may be styled the champions of the popular party, who, having reckoned so as to think themselves almost sure of carrying the cause their own way, pretty plainly spoke out this before the cause had been heard, which was not altogether regular." This insinuation, however, the editors of the *Scots Magazine* declare, in a note, was, as regards Dr. Webster, altogether without foundation.

Were we at all in doubt as to the authorship of the report, the point would be settled by Mr. Boswell's naive introduction of himself as the first speaker introduced; while he takes care to furnish the remarks of no other counsel in the case. They are introduced by their names simply.

"Mr. Boswell said: 'From what has dropped from two distinguished members, there is great reason to apprehend two formidable batteries are planted against us. They were not indeed masked batteries; for we will do them the justice to say they were very *open*. However, if it should be mounting a breach, we must now go on! We have fairly taken the field of battle *con curritur*, and although not *horæ momento*, yet, in a few hours, *cita mors venit aut victoria læta*.'" This laboured metaphor did not much enlighten the case. Mr. Fairbairn then attacked Mr. Boswell, but in a rather flattering style:

* "A Sketch of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland, and the state of parties in it at present, with specimens of the oratory of some of the most distinguished members of the Church now living," *London Magazine*, 1772.

"When I came into this Assembly, sir, I heard of terrible things—I heard of batteries, I heard of cannon. Sir, when a member of this Assembly plants his battery against arbitrary power, I think his conduct just and respectable. Hearing so many warlike terms, I thought I had undergone some magical change, and been suddenly conveyed into an unhappy island where the batteries of a powerful foe have been but too successful against freedom. But, sir, I did not expect that a people struggling for liberty *would be attacked by the friend of Paoli.*" It was then added, "The gentleman who favoured us with this account, regrets much that he could not procure the speech of the Rev. Mr. Frame at Alloa, which he says was one of the most persuasive and beautiful speeches on the side of the people that ever was pronounced."

Then follows a number of sketches of familiar oratory, such as the Rev. Mr. Meek's jocular utterance that "our brother Thomson is in the situation of a lover who has improperly fixed his affections on an object cold and indifferent;" with other sallies, all set out with peculiar relish. This shows how Boswell practised himself in the art of reporting. At the close, Mr. Fairbairn came back to Mr. Boswell: "This morning, sir, we were told from the Bar that there would be *cita mors aut victoria læta;* but, sir, something very wonderful and unexpected has happened—we have both *cita mors* and *victoria læta.*" All which put Mr. Boswell in a complacent humour, for he winds up his report: "We shall only add a repartee of the Rev. Mr. Fairbairn's. In the course of some of the debates, one Mr. Duff, a warm country clergyman, happened to talk of the party against his very strongly, and called them his enemies. Principal Robertson on this got up and expostulated on the indecency of the ex-

pression the '*enemy*' in an assembly of Christian divines. The thing was likely to grow somewhat serious, and poor Duff was not without danger of a reprimand. Mr. Fairbairn, who, though firm and somewhat rough, has good nature equal to his quickness, replied as follows: 'Moderator, the Reverend Principal should remember that he was once raw and warm like our country brother . . . and, sir, to go a little farther, I do beg leave to maintain that the word "enemy" may be very well used in an assembly of Christian divines, for, when the sons of God are met, Satan is in the midst of them, and he is the greatest enemy of all.'"

Mr. Boswell, however, always spoke with deep contempt of this Assembly business. "There was something," he said, "low and coarse" in such employment, "but guineas must be had." "Do you know, it requires more than ordinary spirit to do what I am to do this very morning? arraign a judgment pronounced last year by Dr. Robertson, Sir John Home, and a good many more of them, and they are to appear on the other side. To speak well, when I despise both the cause and the judges is difficult, but I believe I shall do wonderfully."

When General Paoli came to England, Boswell had made himself conspicuous by his attentions, acting as a sort of bear-leader. Among other officious steps that he took, he wrote to Mr. Samuel Vaughan, offering to bring the General to see him, adding, "I live at Mr. Renard's in Bond Street, next door to the Bishop of London's." This attention was declined in rather tart language: "Much as I have admired and revered the late distressed patriot, I equally despise a vain-glorious sycophant." To him, in reply to this "snub," Mr. Boswell wrote: "Sir, you may believe I was not a little surprised with your letter to me. How could you,

who so lately appeared the friend of the brave Corsicans and of their illustrious chief, all at once take up such unworthy suspicions? Might you not have considered that the general, whose character is so fully established, knew better what was the conduct most proper to promote the interests of his country than you could do? and ought you not to have confidence in him? His Excellency has received your card in which you explain yourself. He sees your motives, your manner of thinking, and how you have been misled, and therefore heartily excuses you; and if you will wait on him, he will with pleasure set you right, and convince you that your suspicions are without any foundation." On this amiable expostulation, Mr. Vaughan apologized for his language.

In this year, 1771, he was enabled to return the general's civilities in Scotland, "showing him about" Edinburgh, and welcoming him at his family seat,—to his father's annoyance, who declared that after Doctor Johnson he had now taken up "wi' a landloupin' fellow," and that Jamie had "gane clean gyte." "Yesterday," said a "Letter from Edinburgh," in a style suspiciously like Boswell's, "General Paoli and Count Bevinski arrived here, who came purposely to pay a visit to James Boswell, Esq., a gentleman who is admired for his magnanimity of spirit, affability of temper, and firmness in friendship. He received the general, his particular friend, with the greatest affection and esteem. On Thursday they set out for the West, accompanied by James Boswell, Esq., to the seat of Lord Auchinleck, his father."

On this occasion he imparted his exultation to his friend Garrick: "Since I am upon the serious subject of death, I cannot help expressing, to one who feels as

you do, that I am affected with much melancholy on the death of Mr. Gray. His 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard' has been long like a part of myself . . . I have just been enjoying the very great happiness of a visit from my illustrious friend Pascal Paoli. He was two nights at Auchinleck, and you may figure the joy of my worthy father and me at seeing the Corsican Hero in our romantick groves. , . . I had lately a kind letter from our friend Mr. Samuel Johnson. He still flatters me with hopes of seeing him among the rocks of Scotland!" *

But there is a fuller and more vivacious account, furnished by Boswell himself to the *London Magazine*, and written under the influence of the exultation and triumph of the occasion. The narrative in given in an agreeable, natural way, and I am sure will be welcome to the reader.

"AN AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT OF GENERAL PAOLI'S TOUR TO SCOTLAND, AUTUMN, 1771.

"The illustrious Corsican chief was all along resolved, since he arrived in Great Britain, to make a tour to Scotland, and visit James Boswell, Esq., who was the first gentleman of this country who visited Corsica, and whose writings made the brave islanders and their general properly known and esteemed over Europe. Engagements of a serious and important nature prevented the general from putting his scheme into execution till Monday, August 26, 1771, when he set out from London, accompanied by his Excellency Count Bevinski, the Polish ambassador. After staying at Hagly Park" (on which Mr. Boswell seized the oppor-

* See, also, his two letters to Garrick, in the Garrick correspondence.

tunity to compliment Lord Lyttleton), "they reached Edinburgh on Monday, September 3rd, where they stayed *incognito* at Peter Ramsay's inn, receiving all sorts of attention from Lord Abercorn and others. They dined at Edinburgh with Mr. Boswell on Thursday. The general and the ambassador, accompanied by Mr. Boswell, set out early in the morning for the west, breakfasting at Linlithgow, and viewed there the ancient palace of the Scottish kings. They then viewed the iron works at Carron. General Paoli had a prodigious pleasure in viewing the forge where were formed the cannon and warlike stores which a society of gentlemen in Scotland sent to the brave Corsicans." (Mr. Boswell himself was the head of this society, and assumed the chief credit of the present.) "The party passed on to Glasgow. Here they walked about and viewed the beautiful and flourishing city of Glasgow, without being known. But by the time they got to the university the report went about that General Paoli was in town, and then everybody was in motion, crowding to see him. Their Excellencies viewed the elegant printing, and academy of paintings, sculpture, etc., of the Scottish Stephani, the Messrs. Foulis, who were transported with enthusiasm to see such visitors. The University was not sitting, but there luckily happened to be there the Professors Moor, Muirhead, Anderson, Trail, Wilson, Read, and Stevenson, who showed the university to great advantage, and entertained their Excellencies and a number of other gentlemen of distinction with wine and sweatmeats in the library. The magistrates of Glasgow behaved with that dignity and propriety which might be expected from gentlemen of commerce, and consequently enlarged minds; gentlemen of great fortunes, and consequently independent spirits. They

considered it an honour to their city to show every mark of respect to so distinguished and truly estimable a personage as General Paoli. They therefore met their Excellencies at the Cross, as they understood they were just setting out for Auchinleck, and most politely asked the honour of their company to dinner on Tuesday. The streets and windows of Glasgow were quite full of spectators, and everybody was happy at having an opportunity of seeing General Paoli. . . . Mr. Boswell well-conducted their Excellencies that evening to Auchinleck, the seat of his father, who was extremely happy to receive such guests."

It will be recollected that the laird described his distinguished guest as a "land-loupin' chief."

"They stayed there Friday night and all Saturday, walked a great deal, and saw the place as much as they could do for the time." On the Sunday they set out on their travels, breakfasting with Mr. Campbell, of Treesbank, Boswell's relation. At Stewartson they were met by gentlemen of the county, "who, with a detachment of the tenants of Auchinleck, conveyed their Excellencies to the marsh of the shire." After various adventures, the party returned to Glasgow, where the civic dinner came off at the Saracen's Head, "with the Right Honourable Colin Dunlop, Esquire, Lord Provost, and three other magistrates, Lord Frederick Campbell, member for the city, and a number of other gentlemen of distinction—in all, fifty-two at table; and, after dinner their Excellencies were presented with the freedom of the city, which they accepted in the politest manner. On Wednesday, September 11th, they got back to Edinburgh about noon, and honoured Mr. Boswell with their company all that day. The ambassador lodged at Dr. Gregory's; the general slept under the roof of

his ever-grateful friend. On Thursday, September 12th, they set out on their return to England. During General Paoli's and the ambassador's short stay they enjoyed the company of most people of distinction, learning, and genius who were in town; and, without any flourish or parade of words, it may truly be said that this visit to Scotland will be remembered in the most pleasing and honourable manner."

Such was the pleasant and genuine account of this little progress, in which the "personal conductor" evidently took pride. It was curious that he should have thus escorted his two idols in excursions through his native land. Nor can it be denied that the success of both expeditions was chiefly owing to his untiring fussiness and due ventilation of the importance of the person he was attending. General Paoli, we may be sure, owed his hearty reception to his companion's hints and panegyrics, who was quite content to be thus described—"attended by Mr. Boswell."

Soon after Boswell had "settled down," he seems to have begun a system of testing the regard of his great friend by long silences, always a frivolous and dangerous experiment. He actually allowed a year and a half to pass by without addressing Dr. Johnson a single letter; and at last, in April, 1771, recommenced the correspondence with these odd, and rather inconsequential excuses:—

"My Dear Sir,—I can now fully understand those intervals of silence in your correspondence with me, which have often given me anxiety and uneasiness; for, although I am conscious that my veneration and love for Mr. Johnson have never in the least abated, yet I have deferred for almost a year and a half to write to him."

Johnson, not unnaturally, allowed a long time to pass without noticing this appeal, and replied with some coldness: "If you are now able to comprehend that I might neglect to write without diminution of affection, you have taught me, likewise, how that neglect may be uneasily felt without resentment. I wished for your letter a long time, and, when it came, it amply recompensed the delay. I never was so much pleased as now with your account of yourself; and sincerely hope, that between public business, improving studies, and domestic pleasures, neither melancholy nor caprice will find any place for entrance. . . . My dear sir, mind your studies, mind your business, make your lady happy, and be a good Christian after this. . . . If we perform our duty, we shall be safe and steady, *Sive per, etc.*, whether we climb the Highlands, or are tossed among the Hebrides; and I hope the time will come when we may try our powers both with cliffs and water."

This was good, sensible advice, and it were devoutly to be wished that Boswell had taken it to heart.

In March, 1772, Boswell, as usual, "ran up" to London, on the excuse of business. It was on this occasion that he furnished a rather touching evidence of his attachment to his friend. On April 9th, he had asked Johnson to dine with him at the Mitre. But the doctor, for some mysterious reason, "had resolved not to dine at all this day, and I was so unwilling," says Boswell, unaffectedly, "to be deprived of his company, that I was content to suffer a want which was at first somewhat painful; but, he soon made me forget it, and a man is always pleased with himself when he finds his intellectual inclinations predominate." This "going without one's dinner" is certainly sincere, if painful,

earnest of enthusiasm and affection. The business which had brought Boswell to London was an appeal to the House of Lords in a Scotch schoolmaster's case, and which, on April 14th, was decided by reversing the decision of the Scotch tribunals. He returned home about the beginning of May.

In April, of the following year (1773), he again paid another visit to town. No doubt the business that brought him was his momentous candidature for the Literary Club, the balloting being fixed for April 30th. He himself "canvassed" zealously, and his patron exerted himself warmly. "Sir, you got into our club," said the doctor to him in the Hebrides, "by doing what a man can do." "This, I find," adds Boswell oddly, "is considered obscure." He concluded that Johnson meant "he earnestly and assiduously recommended himself to some of the members." There were several persons, as Johnson told him, "who wished to keep him out:" Burke doubted "if he were fit for it." The doctor assured him that when he was in, none were sorry. "Burke says you have so much good humour naturally, it is scarcely a virtue." It seems odd, certainly, printing this compliment. With his usual lack of tact he could thus speak of the members who had so welcomed him: "They were afraid of you, sir," Johnson declared; "but they'd never have got in another." It must be said it was contrived that the business should be made as "safe" as possible. Beauclerk gave a dinner specially, on the night of election, April 30th, to which were asked Sir Joshua, Lord Charlemont, and a few others of the same importance. After dinner, when the gentlemen went away, Boswell was left behind—"till the fate of my election should be announced to me." News soon arrived that he had been successful. He had, in

fact, scarcely been in peril; for, in addition to Beauclerk's guests, there were only Burke, Garrick, Dr. Nugent, Goldsmith and Jones, who were all well disposed to him. Boswell must have been an agreeable addition, with his gossip and his own pleasant absurdities.

During the ballot, as we have said, Boswell had been left behind, and as his host had been so kind, he took care to introduce a compliment into the second edition of his book: "I sat in a state of anxiety which not even the charming society of Lady Di Beauclerk could dissipate." Yet he could publish, a few pages further on, a strange discussion on a nameless divorced lady, whom he attempted thus to excuse: "seduced, perhaps, by the charms of the lady in question." He enumerated all the circumstances of the case, which showed that "Lady Di" was intended, and with the result of making Johnson, who took the opposite side, apply to her one of the coarsest words known in the language. All which must have been recognizable by her friends. The compliment, the defence, and Johnson's coarse description make the oddest combination conceivable. As is well known, she had eloped with the gay Mr. Beauclerk from her husband, Lord Bolingbroke, owing to his cruel treatment. But the unhappy lady fared no better with her new choice. It will be a surprise to many Boswellians who admire the lively, good-natured Beauclerk, to find that he was a cruel and neglectful husband.

From all this trifling, he turned to prepare for that celebrated and remarkable travelling expedition with his friend, which he had looked forward to and planned for years, and to which he had induced Johnson to consent. It was certainly a triumph to prevail on one so prejudiced to undertake a serious journey to see

a country he disliked. But Johnson had also in view a literary speculation, and proposed turning his travels into "copy;" and, as it proved, had a handsome profit from the transaction.

The great attraction found in the study of Boswell and his book, lies in the complexities of character there revealed. Nowhere do we find its phenomena so curiously and so pleasantly displayed. This view has scarcely been opened, numerous as are the commentaries. By and by, no doubt, we shall have a formal study of the psychology of Boswell. In this view nothing is more entertaining than the little arts which, almost unconsciously, our author exhibited when he wished to appear particularly clever and sagacious: and on this occasion he prepared a train of devices to stimulate the ardour of his friend. He wrote a number of letters to persons in Edinburgh, inviting replies, and hinting plainly that these should express a sort of eager anticipation for Johnson's coming. "I hope you will, without delay, write me, what I know you think, that I may read it to the mighty sage, with proper emphasis." Dr. Beattie "was as good as his word, and threw some pleasing motives into the northern scale." Everything was to be done "to attract him,"—Dr. Robertson also was invited to forward the scheme, and "in his answer to express himself concerning it with that power which may be so directed as to operate strongly upon him." Thus ingenious plan had the happiest effect, and stirred up the Scotch literati into some flattering demonstrations which really influenced Johnson.*

* The reader will recall many other devices of the kind. On a later occasion he employed the same form to get Johnson to visit Mr. Young, a relation of the poet's. Says Boswell, "Here some address was requisite: for I was not acquainted with Mr.

Young, and had I proposed to Dr. Johnson that we should send to him, he would have checked my wish and perhaps been offended. I, therefore, concerted with Mr. Dilly, that I should steal away and try what reception I could procure from Mr. Young: if unfavourable, nothing was to be said; but if agreeable, I should return to notify it to them. I hastened to Mr. Young's, found he was at home, sent in word that a gentleman desired to wait upon him." He was asked to tea. "I thanked him, but said, that I must return to the inn to drink tea with Dr. Johnson; that my name was Boswell, I had travelled with him in the Hebrides. 'Sir,' said he, 'I should think it a great honour to see Dr. Johnson here. Will you allow me to send for him?' Availing myself of this opening, I said that 'I would go myself and bring him, when he had drunk tea; he knew nothing of my calling here.' Having been thus successful, I hastened back to the inn, and informed Dr. Johnson that 'Mr. Young, son of Dr. Young, the authour of 'Night Thoughts,' whom I had just left, desired to have the honour of seeing him at the house where his father lived.' *Dr. Johnson luckily made no enquiry how this invitation had arisen,* but agreed to go, and when he entered Mr. Young's parlour, he addressed him with a very polite bow." The result was that Mr. Young fancied that the happy thought had occurred to him of asking the great "cham" of letters, and did not suspect that his visitor had come purposely to extract the invitation; while Johnson believed that a spontaneous message had been sent to him.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TOUR IN THE HEBRIDES.

1773.

Boswell, with his usual adroitness, had no doubt planned this enterprise, not merely for the enjoyment of the society of his friend, but also with the view of bringing himself prominently before the public. It was a real triumph, for he figured as the guide and friend of the sage; and as the latter was to write a chronicle of their progress, he would come in for his full share of credit. Indeed, Johnson opened his chronicle with a very handsome compliment to his friend, to the effect that he was "induced to undertake the journey by finding in Mr. Boswell a companion whose acuteness would help any inquiry, and whose gaiety of conversation and civility of manner are sufficient to counteract the inconveniences of travel." And it must be said never was compliment better deserved. Boswell's unflagging good humour and good temper, his energy in carrying through the enterprise, his gaiety and lively talk, and his success in overcoming difficulties and finding opportunities for amusing Johnson, were displayed in a remarkable manner. He bore the ill humour and often offensive taunts of his friend in the most patient way.

It was a great event in the life of Boswell when, on the evening of Saturday, the 14th of August, 1773, a note was brought to him from Boyd's inn in the Canongate, known as the White Horse, written with the pleasant formality which then prevailed, even among intimate friends:

"August 14th, Saturday night.

"Mr. Johnson sends his compliments to Mr. Boswell, being just arrived at Boyd's." *

Boswell flew to him, and was embraced by him cordially, as he had been embraced on his departure for Holland. Here is a curious change in our manners; for it is forgotten that this foreign custom ever obtained in England. Boswell carried him off to his own house, where he was received in a rather dry, cold way by Mrs. Boswell, who, it is plain, disliked the incursion. At first she controlled herself, and tried to please him, actually giving up her own room, which her husband publicly acknowledged "gratefully, as one of a thousand obligations I owe her since her great obligation of being pleased to accept of me as a husband." This funny testimonial must have caused many a smile among Bozzy's friends. In course of time the perpetual trouble of attending to his wants quite tired her out, and on his

* Boyd's White Horse was in the Grass Market. A traveller, writing in 1779, describes it as "mean buildings, their apartments dirty and dismal, and, if the waiters happened to be out of the way, a stranger will perhaps be shocked by the novelty of being shown into the room by a dirty sunburnt wench, without shoes or stockings." The truth was, these houses were used for keeping horses; and guests, unless of a very temporary sort, were conveyed to lodgings: so that Johnson, had he known of these things, might have added to his sneer, as to "the food of horses in Scotland being that of men," that the stables were used to accommodate men.

return she let him see that she found him disagreeable, and was eager for him to be gone. This was expressed so plainly that Johnson, on his first letter after his return, wrote bluntly, "I know Mrs. Boswell wished me well to go; her wishes have not been disappointed:" on which Boswell, with some *naïveté* remarks, "In this he showed a very acute penetration." He complains that his irregular hours and uncouth habits, such as "turning the candles with their heads downwards when they did not burn brightly enough, and letting the wax drop upon the carpet, could not but be disagreeable to her."

It is remarkable what suitable and distinguished people Boswell asked to meet his guest, such as the old Duchess of Douglas; the Chief Baron, Orde; Lord Hailes; the Commander-in-Chief; Sir William Forbes: with Drs. Robertson, Blair, Blacklock, Gregory, and Adam Fergusson. It must be admitted, however, that this was, of course, no particular compliment to the host himself, but that the wish to meet so great a personage as the doctor was an irresistible attraction. The good-natured Boswell was indefatigable in his efforts to amuse his friend. Among the guests was a person who does not figure in the chronicle—Dr. Boswell, his uncle. The nephew, however, does not give us a single remark of his relation. There was much exhibition of the lions of the city, suppers, etc.; in short, Boswell did his part admirably. These opening scenes have good local colour; the reader feels that he is on a sort of holiday, and is visiting a strange city. The persons who appear for a moment are dramatically put in. We see the great doctor led about in Parliament Close, closely followed and pointed out. It was said, indeed, that one of the rough wits of the Bar, Harry Erskine, on being

presented by Boswell to his guest, slyly pressed a shilling into Boswell's palm, as payment "for the sight of his bear." * Nothing is more to be admired in this tour than Boswell's unflagging patience and good humour, and the unwearied and successful efforts he made to secure what would effectively contribute to the enjoyment of his companion. He put up with all outbursts of ill-temper, was always in spirits himself, and, in short, was a capital fellow-traveller. In his private letters to Mrs. Thrale, Johnson gave him this testimonial: "I shall celebrate his good humour and perpetual cheerfulness. He has better faculties than I had imagined, and more justness of discernment, and more fecundity of images. It is very convenient to travel with him, for there is no house where he is not received with kindness and respect." These qualities certainly go to prove that his was no trivial character; which certainly could not have stood the test of such trials. Goldsmith had, indeed, warned him angrily, "that Johnson would be a dead weight," and that he would never be able to "lug him through the Highlands;" but the undaunted Boswell saw no difficulties.†

* In the Advocates' Library is a pleasing memorial of the tour—a copy of Martin's "St. Kilda," with the inscription in Boswell's handwriting: "This book accompanied Mr. Johnson and me on our tour through the Hebrides."

† Even in the opening scene of his pilgrimage, Boswell displays his usual want of tact in mentioning his friends, owing to the awkward but well-meaning fashion in which he praised them; as when speaking of one of the guests invited to meet Dr. Johnson at Edinburgh: "Mr. Murray, advocate, who married a niece of Lord Mansfield's, and is now one of the judges of Scotland, by the title of Lord Henderland, sat with us part of the evening, but did not venture to say anything that I remember, though he is certainly possessed of talents which would have enabled him to have shown himself to advantage if too great anxiety had not prevented him"—in spite of which compliment this gentleman could not have been gratified at the sketch. But,

On the Monday, August 18th, they set out. They were to ride, walk, and go by boat, according to their needs. They were attended by Boswell's Bohemian servant: the doctor, as Boswell says, thinking "it unnecessary to put himself to the expense" of bringing his own man; the truth being, the doctor thought that Boswell's servant would serve for both. At the end of the journey, a balance was owing to Boswell, which Johnson discharged in his own fashion—selecting from his shelves a number of old books, packing them in a box, and sending them off as payment of his debt! Boswell was rather disgusted at this mode of acquittance. A "stall library" he called them, and did not care to open the box,—which put his friend much out of humour.

They reached St. Andrew's next day, and passed to the eccentric Lord Monboddo's, who entertained them at dinner, behaving like a gentleman of the old and stately school, and who showed himself courteous and obliging in many ways. It was strange, therefore, that Boswell should afterwards have never mentioned him without coarse ridicule and contempt. This rather remarkable personage scarcely deserved the laughter and jeers with which his theories as to men having tails, or being scarcely removed from apes, were greeted. In our day these matters are solemnly debated as belonging to scientific process. He maintained that men were gradually divested of their tails by a process of "development" or "continued docking." Another theory for which he was ridiculed, was that the Greek language alone was worthy of study as the most efficient and

as Boswell frankly said of himself, "he had rather too little than too much prudence, and, his imagination being lively, he often said things of which the effect was very different from the intention."

expressive; and he was loud in his condemnation of the modern "fine" writing and artificial periods of Robertson and others. Here, again, he seemed rational enough. His whole course was marked by a steady assertion of principle and of even self-denial. When he was offered a seat in the Court of Justiciary he declined it, as it would interfere with his literary studies. He always rose at a very early hour, and it was said, used to take what he called an "air bath"—walking about for some time without his clothes. On his journeys to London, he always rode, disdaining the use of a chaise; and once, when between eighty and ninety, he was seized with an illness, and would have died on the road, but for a friend who insisted on his, for once, using his carriage. He had many domestic trials in the loss of his children. His daughter was celebrated for her beauty and engaging qualities: and still more for her filial affection, which made her decline many advantageous offers, to remain with her father. She was sung by Burns:—"Fair (Burnet) strikes th' adoring eye." She died before her father. We must regret, therefore, that Boswell, who was often betrayed into breaches of decorum and good feeling, should have ridiculed this worthy old judge, who welcomed him with such dignified hospitality.*

* Mr. Pryce Gordon, a lively but eccentric Scot himself, describes a droll scene: "Lord Kames was the great literary *lion* of his day. In manners he was quite a contrast to his brother of the bench, being plain, and blunt in speech, with a strong Scottish accent, while Monboddo was quite a courtier of the *ancien regime*, well-bred, and ceremonious. In the celebrated work on *man*, the author asserts that men originally had *tails*, but had worn them off by sitting on chairs! On one occasion, in Edinburgh, when Kames and Monboddo met to dine with a friend, a girl of six or seven years old, who was in the drawing-room, archly and slyly attached a fox's brush to Monboddo's skirt; and the ceremony of who should first proceed to the dining-room as usual produced some

By the 21st, they were at Aberdeen, where the professors were cordial and hospitable, and Johnson received the freedom of the city, walking about with the ticket in his hat. Again, of this university town, where they were received with such honour, Boswell chose to speak with something like contempt, which gave deep offence.

They were then invited to Glamis Castle, Lord Errol's, Dr. Johnson having been "espied in church by Lady Di Middleton." Their stay at this mansion furnished Boswell with another of his agreeable and artistic sketches, the figures and conversation being brought before us in a lifelike way, with the tone of a country house. On the 28th, they came to Fort George, where they were welcomed by Sir Eyre Coote, passing on to Fort Augustus — now a Benedictine College—in which he furnished us with some agreeable, spirited sketches of garrison life. On September 1st, Boswell's good humour was put to a sore trial. He thought he would ride on a little in advance to the inn, to have everything comfortable for his friend, when the doctor roared to him to come back, in a tremendous passion, said he was "uncivil," called it "picking pockets," etc. Poor Boswell gently explained that he meant no offence. The doctor said afterwards that he thought of going back to Edinburgh, and would never have spoken to him again! (At the inn he had to lie on hay, but Boswell was consoled by reading, in the doctor's "Tour," "Mr. Boswell, being more delicate, laid himself sheets with hay over and

demur (Monboddo insisting that he could not possibly *precede* a *senior* lord), till Kames, spying the tricks which had been played on his friend, exclaimed, 'Gang in, man, and shaw's your tail!' pushing him forward. Of course the laugh was irresistible, but Monboddo could not enjoy it, as, through fear of giving him offence, he was not informed of the joke."

under him, and lay in linen like a gentleman.") Johnson, however, apologized, in his way, "Let's think no more on't." It is clear the sage was already disgusted and out of humour with the inconveniences and discomforts of the journey they had just begun. Then said the amiable Bozzy, who had slept ill the night before, thinking of his treatment, "Well, sir, I shall be easy. Remember, I am to have fair warning in case of a quarrel. You are never to spring a mine on me. It was absurd in me to believe you." This was amiable.

They were now to leave the mainland, and row over to Skye. They were met on landing by Sir Alexander Macdonald. This potentate was married to a Miss Bosville, a cousin or relation of Boswell's, being sister to his "Chief," as he styled him, the Bosville of Thorpe in Yorkshire. This connection ought to have secured discretion, but, as will be shown later, our hero was to exhibit himself in a very foolish manner.

The house had been recently burnt down, and the owners were obliged to live in a small one belonging to one of their factors. Their hosts even came specially from Edinburgh to meet the travellers, who, however, were much disgusted at their entertainment, which, under the circumstances, was of a meagre kind.

Next they passed to another part of the island, to Rasay, the seat of the McLeods, and which Dr. Johnson spells as he heard it sounded, "*Raarsa.*" Here they found genuine and characteristic Highland hospitality, which is described as new and interesting. After a short stay they passed to another house, where they met the celebrated Flora Macdonald, of whom Boswell gives a picturesque sketch. They came on to Dunvegan, where they were detained many days by the bad weather. Young "Col"—a pleasant, off-handed, good-natured

being, who was to owe a celebrity he would never have enjoyed, to Boswell's natural and interesting drawing of his character—brought them on to *Corrichatachin*, where Boswell, on the night of their arrival, exhibited himself to much disadvantage.

On this scene, which he frankly described in his book, the unlucky author was much baited in public and private. It seems, indeed, to be the very *reductio ad absurdum* of the author's own absurdity. No one, before or since, has ever thought of describing himself in a state of intoxication, in all its stages.

"Dr. Johnson went to bed soon. When one bowl of punch was finished, I rose, and was near the door, in my way upstairs to bed; but Corrichatachin said, it was the first time Col had been in his house, and he should have his bowl;—and would not I join in drinking it? The heartiness of my honest landlord, and the desire of doing social honour to our very obliging conductor, induced me to sit down again. *Col's* bowl was finished, and by that time we were well warmed. A third bowl was soon made, and that too was finished. We were cordial and merry to a high degree; *but of what passed I have no recollection, with any accuracy.* I remember calling *Corrichatachin* by the familiar appellation of *Corri*, which his friends do. A fourth bowl was made, by which time *Col*, and young M'Kinnon, Corrichatachin's son, slipped away to bed. I continued a little with *Corri* and *Knockow;* but at last I left them. *It was near five in the morning* when I got to bed."

This was bad enough as a description of himself. But he must call in his great friend, to record his disgust and contempt:—

"*Sunday, September 26th.*—I awaked," he tells us, "at noon, with a severe headache. I was much vexed

that I should have been guilty of such a riot, and afraid of a reproof from Dr. Johnson. About one he came into my room, and accosted me, '*What, drunk yet?*'—His tone of voice was not that of severe upbraiding; so I was relieved a little.—'Sir,' said I, 'they kept me up.' He answered, 'No, you kept them up, you drunken dog'—this he said with good-humoured *English* pleasantry. Soon afterwards, Corrichatachin, Col, and other friends assembled round my bed. *Corri* had a brandy bottle and glass with him, and insisted I should take a dram.—'*Ay*,' said Dr. Johnson, '*fill him drunk again. Do it in the morning, that we may laugh at him all day.* It is a poor thing for a fellow to get drunk at night, and sculk to bed, and let his friends have no sport.'—*Finding him thus jocular, I became quite easy;* and when I offered to get up, he very good-naturedly said, 'No, you need be in no such hurry now.' I took my host's advice, and drank some brandy, which I found an effective cure for my headache." His praises here, of his friend's indulgence, "finding him thus jocular" when he was showing his contempt, is a singular instance of blindness. With what feelings Mrs. Boswell must have perused this account! But the wind-up is the most extraordinary portion: "When I rose, taking up Mrs. Mackinnon's Prayer Book, I opened it at the twentieth Sunday after Epiphany, in the Epistle for which I read, 'And be not drunk with wine, wherein there is excess.' Some would have taken this as a Divine interposition." The company let him off easily: "I felt myself comfortable enough in the afternoon. I then thought that my last night's riot was no more than such a social excess as may happen without much moral blame; and recollected that some physicians maintained, that a fever produced by it was, upon the

whole, good for health: so different are our reflections on the same subject, at different periods; and such the excuses with which we palliate what we know to be wrong." *

* The following is a graphic and picturesque scene: "While we were chatting in the indolent stile of men who were to stay here all this day at least, we were suddenly roused at being told that the wind was fair, that a little fleet of herring-busses was passing by for Mull, and that Mr. Simpson's vessel was about to sail. Hugh M'Donald, the skipper, came to us, and was impatient that we should get ready, which we soon did. . . . He rode, and I and the other gentlemen walked, about an English mile to the shore, where the vessel lay. . . . We were carried to the vessel in a small boat which she had, and we set sail very briskly about one o'clock. I was much pleased with the motion for many hours. Dr. Johnson grew sick, and retired under cover, as it rained a good deal. I kept above, that I might have fresh air, and finding myself not affected by the motion of the vessel, I exulted in being a stout seaman, while Dr. Johnson was quite in a state of annihilation. But I was soon humbled; for, after imagining that I could go with ease to America or the East Indies, I became very sick, but kept above board, though it rained hard. . . .

"We were then obliged to tack, and get forward in that tedious manner. As we advanced the storm grew greater, and the sea very rough. . . . The old skipper still tried to make for the land of Mull, but then it was considered that there was no place there where we could anchor in safety. Much time was lost in striving against the storm. At last it became so rough and threatened to be so much worse, that Col and his servant took more courage, and said they would undertake to hit one of the harbours in Col.—'Then let us run for it in God's name,' said the skipper; and instantly we turned towards it. The little wherry which had fallen behind us had hard work. The master begged that, if we made for Col, we should put out a light to him. Accordingly one of the sailors waved a glowing peat for some time. The various difficulties that were started gave me a good deal of apprehension, from which I was relieved when I found we were to run for a harbour before the wind. But my relief was but of short duration; for I soon heard that our sails were very bad, and were in danger of being torn to pieces, in which case we should be driven upon the rocky shore of Col. It was very dark, and there was a heavy and incessant rain. The sparks of the burning peat flew so much about, that I dreaded the vessel might take fire. Then, as Col was a sportsman, and had powder on board, I figured that we might be blown up. Simpson and he appeared a little frightened, which made me more so; and the perpetual talking, or rather

This scene was not forgotten in the caricatures. The laughter was so loud that he was obliged to say something in his next edition. "My ingenuously relating this occasional instance of intemperance, has, I find, been made the subject both of serious criticism and ludicrous banter. With the banterers I shall not

shouting, which was carried on in Erse, alarmed me still more. . . . I now saw what I never saw before, a prodigious sea, with immense billows coming upon a vessel, so as that it seemed hardly possible to escape. There was something grandly horrible in the sight. I am glad I have seen it once. Amidst all these terrifying circumstances, I endeavoured to compose my mind. It was not easy to do it; for all the stories that I had heard of the dangerous sailing among the Hebrides, which is proverbial, came full upon my recollection. . . .

"It was half an hour after eleven before we set ourselves in the course for Col. As I saw them all busy doing something, I asked Col, with much earnestness, what I could do. He, with a happy readiness, put into my hand a rope, which was fixed to the top of one of the masts, and told me to hold it till he bade me pull. If I had considered the matter, I might have seen that this could not be of the least service; but his object was to keep me out of the way of those who were busy working the vessel, and at the same time to divert my fear by employing me, and making me think that I was of use. Thus did I stand firm to my post, while the wind and rain beat upon me, always expecting a call to pull my rope.

"The man with one eye steered; old M'Donald, and Col, and his servant lay upon the forecastle, looking sharp out for the harbour. It was necessary to carry much *cloth*, as they termed it, that is to say, much sail, in order to keep the vessel off the shore of Col. This made violent plunging in a rough sea. At last they spied the harbour off Lochiern, and Col cried, 'Thank God, we are safe!' We ran up till we were opposite to it, and soon afterwards we got into it, and cast anchor.

"Dr. Johnson had all this time been quiet and unconcerned. He had lain down on one of the beds, and having got free from sickness, was satisfied. The truth is, he knew nothing of the danger we were in. . . . Once, during the doubtful consultations, he asked whither we were going; and, upon being told that it was not certain whether to Mull or Col, he cried, 'Col for my money!' I now went down, with Col and Mr. Simpson, to visit him. He was lying in philosophick tranquillity, with a greyhound of Col's at his back, keeping him warm."

trouble myself, but I wonder that those who pretend to the appellation of serious critics, should not have sagacity enough to perceive that here, as in every other part of my work, my object was to delineate Dr. Johnson, etc."

By October 5th they were at young Col's house, who entertained the travellers cordially. By the 17th they reached Lochbuy, where Sir Allan M'Clean welcomed them with much hospitality. But here Boswell, in a very droll way, was to exhibit the weak side of his nature. Johnson was late in coming down to breakfast, and, while they were waiting, the laird's sister "proposed that he should have some cold sheep's-head for breakfast. Sir Allan seemed displeased at his sister's vulgarity, and wondered how such a thought should come into her head. *From a mischievous love of sport, I took the lady's part*, and very gravely said, 'I think it is but fair to give him an offer of it. If he does not choose it, he may let it alone.'—'I think so,' said the lady, looking at her brother with an air of victory. Sir Allan, finding the matter desperate, strutted about the room, and took snuff. When Dr. Johnson came in, she called to him, "Do you choose any cold sheep's-head, sir?'—'No, MADAM,' said he, with a tone of surprise and anger.—'It is here, sir,' said she, supposing he had refused it to save the trouble of bringing it in. They thus went on at cross purposes, till he confirmed his refusal in a manner not to be misunderstood; *while I sat quietly by, and enjoyed my success.*" Thus ingeniously he had caused a dispute between brother and sister, and between Johnson and the lady, and, for his own further satisfaction, he publicly exhibited his good-natured hostess's "vulgarity." "So thick a hide is not in nature, sir," his friend might have

said; "it must have taken him a world of pains to become what he is."

Then followed the visit to Iona, which inspired Johnson with a well-known, but rather over-praised passage. After which they turned their steps home, and were glad, in Johnson's phrase, to find themselves once more "in a country of saddles and bridles." A most gratifying incident for the guide, was the visit to Inverary Castle. Here it was that poor Boswell, exhilarated by the success of the expedition, behaved with more than his usual extravagance. The scene is well known and admirably drawn. Johnson seems to have had always to keep in check the "pushing" disposition of his friend, which led him often to intrude: the sage himself had a gentlemanly delicacy in such matters. Boswell was for going up to the castle early, so as to extract an invitation to dinner. Johnson, always well-bred—"insisted that I should not go before dinner, as it would look like seeking an invitation. 'But,' said I, 'if the Duke invites us to dine with him to-morrow, shall we accept?' 'Yes, Sir,' I think he said, 'to be sure.' But he added, 'He won't ask us.' We dined well. I went to the castle just about the time when I supposed the ladies would be retiring from dinner. I sent in my name; and, being shown in, found the amiable duke sitting at the head of his table with several gentlemen. I was most politely received. . . . When we rose from table, the duke said to me, 'I hope you and Dr. Johnson will dine with us to-morrow.' I thanked his grace; but told him my friend was in a great hurry to get back to London. The duke, *with a kind complacency*, said, 'He will stay one day; and I will take care he shall see this place to advantage.' I said, 'I should be sure to let him know his grace's invitation. As I was going away, the duke

said, 'Mr. Boswell, won't you have some tea?' I thought it best to get over the meeting with the duchess this night; so respectfully agreed. I was conducted to the drawing-room by the duke, who announced my name; but the duchess, who was sitting with her daughter, Lady Betty Hamilton, and some other ladies, *took not the least notice of me.* I should have been mortified at being thus coldly received by a lady of whom I, with the rest of the world, have always entertained a very high admiration, had I not been consoled by the obliging attention of the duke. . . .

"My acquaintance, the Rev. Mr. John M'Aulay, came to us this morning, and accompanied us to the castle, where I presented Dr. Johnson to the Duke of Argyle. We were shown through the house; *and I never shall forget the impression made upon my fancy by some of the ladies' maids tripping about in neat morning dresses.* After seeing for a long time little but rusticity, their lively manner, and gay inviting appearance, pleased me so much, that I thought for a moment I could have been a knight-errant for them. . . .

"When we came in, before dinner, we found the duke and some gentlemen in the hall. The duke placed Dr. Johnson next himself at table. I was in fine spirits; and though sensible that I had the misfortune of not being in favour with the duchess, I was not in the least disconcerted, and offered her grace some of the dish that was before me. It must be owned that I was in the right to be quite unconcerned, if I could. I was the Duke of Argyle's guest; and I had no reason to suppose that he had adopted the prejudices and resentments of the Duchess of Hamilton.

"I knew it was the rule of modern high life not to drink to any body; but, that I might have the satis-

faction for once to look the duchess in the face, with a glass in my hand, I, with a respectful air addressed her, 'My Lady Duchess, I have the honour to drink your grace's good health.' I repeated the words audibly, and with a steady countenance. This was, perhaps, rather too much; but some allowance must be made for human feelings. . . . I made some remark that seemed to imply a belief in *second sight*. The duchess said, 'I fancy you will be a *methodist*.' This was the only sentence her grace deigned to utter to me; and I take it for granted, she thought it a good hit on my *credulity* in the Douglas cause. . . .

"We went to tea. The duke and I walked up and down the drawing-room, conversing. The duchess still continuing to show the same marked coldness for me; for which, though I suffered from it, I made every allowance, considering the very warm part that I had taken for Douglas, in the cause in which she thought her son deeply interested. Had not her grace discovered some displeasure towards me, I should have suspected her of insensibility or dissimulation.

"Her grace made Dr. Johnson come and sit by her, and asked him why he made his journey so late in the year. 'Why, Madam,' said he, 'you know Mr. Boswell must attend the court of sessions, and it does not rise till the twelfth of August.' She said, with some sharpness, 'I *know nothing* of Mr. Boswell.' Poor Lady Lucy Douglas, to whom I mentioned this, observed, 'She knew *too much* of Mr. Boswell.' I shall make no remark on her grace's speech. I indeed felt it as rather too severe; but when I recollected that my punishment was inflicted by so dignified a beauty, I had that kind of consolation which a man would feel who is strangled by a *silken cord*.

"He was much pleased with our visit at the castle of Inverary. The Duke of Argyle was exceedingly polite to him, and, upon his complaining of the shelties which he had hitherto ridden being too small for him, his grace told him he should be provided with a good horse to carry him next day."

No comment could do justice to this extraordinary picture.

Before coming to his father's castle, Boswell took his friend to his brother-in-law's, Mr. Campbell of Treesbank, who was married to one of Mrs. Boswell's sisters, and whom he dismisses in rather a patronizing way: "We were entertained very agreeably by *a worthy couple.*" The children of this "worthy couple" were, however, the source of some of Boswell's embarrassments, as he was induced, no doubt by his wife, to borrow a sum of seven or eight hundred pounds for their use, and seems to have taken charge of their advancement in the world. Dr. Johnson, however, though entertained by this family, calls the lady "Mr. Boswell's sister." They reached Glasgow, putting up at the "Saracen's Head," and enjoyed a coal fire. Then came the visit to Auchinleck.

It is admirably and naturally described, and the *tone* and the tranquil air of the place caught to perfection. "I was very anxious," he says, "that all should be well. I begged of my friend to avoid three topics, on which they differed very widely, Whiggism, Presbyterianism, and—Sir John Pringle. . . . Our first day went off very smoothly,"—when the library was shown to the doctor, and there followed discussions on the editions, etc. The next day Boswell took his friend over the place, showed the old castle, adding, as an acceptable topic, that he intended to erect a monument to him there "among the graves,"—which, however, he forgot

to do. Johnson turned off the subject, which was always distasteful to him. But in a day or two, what Boswell dreaded came about. "If I recollect right, the contest began while my father was showing him his collection of medals"—it will be noted what elegant tastes the old judge had—"and Oliver Cromwell's coin unfortunately introduced Charles I. and Toryism. They became exceedingly warm and violent, and I was very much distressed by being present at such an altercation between two men, both of whom I reverenced; yet I dared not interfere. It would certainly be very unbecoming in me to exhibit my honoured father, and my respected friend, as intellectual gladiators, for the entertainment of the public; and therefore I suppress what would make an interesting scene in this dramatic sketch." He was, no doubt, dying to give it, as it would have been dramatic in the highest degree. Johnson challenged him to point out any work of merit by a Presbyterian minister, and the judge was somewhat puzzled, but recollected a name he had seen in a catalogue, "upon which he boldly said, 'Pray, sir, have you read Mr. Durham's excellent Commentary on the Galatians?' 'No, sir,' said Dr. Johnson. By this lucky thought my father kept him at bay, and for some time enjoyed his triumph; but his antagonist soon made a retort, which I forbear to mention." This is lightly and admirably touched, with the proper reserve of comedy. "In the course of this altercation, Whiggism and Presbyterianism, Toryism and Episcopacy, *were terribly* buffeted. My worthy, hereditary friend, Sir John Pringle, never having been mentioned, happily escaped *without a bruise*." These capital scenes appear really to have something akin to what we find in the earlier "Waverley Novels," and there is something of

the same natural vigorous drawing in the characters of the judge and the doctor. On the Sunday Johnson declined to attend a parish church, along the "Via Sacra"—an avenue, three miles long, lined with trees, which led to it. And on the Monday they quitted Auchinleck, after a stay of close on a week. "Notwithstanding the altercations," says Boswell, "my father, who had the dignified courtesy of an old baron, was very civil to Dr. Johnson, and politely attended him to the post-chaise which was to convey us to Edinburgh. Thus they parted. They are now in another, and a higher state of existence; and, as they were both worthy, Christian men, I trust they have met in happiness." This is a pleasing graceful *envoi;* and it must be said that Boswell acquitted himself in a trying position judiciously.*

On November 9th, they returned to Edinburgh, after a spirited tour of ninety-four days. At Edinburgh the most lavish hospitalities were heaped on the travellers, after which Johnson took his leave, and returned to London. He said afterwards that he had never relished any of his excursions so much as this; and that nothing had furnished him with so many new ideas, or so enlarged his views.

It is curious that of this remarkable pilgrimage there are no less than three distinct records, each made from a different point of view. The first in importance is, of course, Boswell's inimitable account, which unfolds the effect of all that was seen and encountered, on two observing and vivacious minds. Next we have Dr.

* The judge and the doctor must have met again in Edinburgh. For we are told that the former saw Johnson come into his court, and whispered to one of his brethren this "sly, abrupt expression —'URSA MAJOR!'"

Johnson's pleasant and vivacious accounts, written to Mrs. Thrale, and which have hardly received the attention they deserve. Indeed, a whole collection of these letters might form an agreeable supplement to his life, as they are most entertaining, and, in this way, supply a good idea of the less formal side of Johnson's character. They furnish also many little characteristic touches of Boswell, such as that "he blustered," or "danced a reel."

Johnson's own official account, though admired, is somewhat ponderous, and portions of it—the observations on the state of agriculture, etc.—read like a parliamentary report. It was felt, however, that in this account, as well as in Boswell's, there was a good deal of ungraciousness, as many hospitalities were requited with fault-finding, and even ridicule. Indeed, the doctor's book excited a storm of angry protest, which explains why none of the Scotch universities thought of offering him a degree.*

* Boswell had great hopes that he would be allowed to have some share in the popularity that attended his great friend's work, and prepared a long list of supplemental remarks and comments. But he had to confess ruefully that "Dr. Johnson does not seem very desirous that I should publish any supplement. Between ourselves, he is not apt to encourage one to share reputation with himself." So eager was he, however, that he made the odd suggestion that he should send them to his friend Temple to be revised, "and then they may be published freely." As the remarks may have been corrections of mistakes into which Johnson had fallen, they would thus have the air of being the work of an independent critic. Such were the little devices to which his itch for authorship led him.

CHAPTER XVI.

BIRTH OF A SON—VISITS TO LICHFIELD, OXFORD, ETC.

1775.

It is curious to find that, after the tour, Boswell should have remained nearly two years without visiting London. This may have been owing to pecuniary pressure, and was due also to his wife's objections. In 1774 he had consulted his friend whether he should make his annual expedition, mentioning as a reason "the peculiar satisfaction" he experienced in celebrating the festival of Easter at St. Paul's. It seemed to him "like going up to Jerusalem for the Passover, and the strong devotion he felt on such occasions influenced him for the rest of the year." In answer to this very transparent excuse, Johnson wrote him a sensible letter of advice, bidding him comply with Mrs. Boswell's entreaties, and make "reciprocal concessions," as she had allowed him his ramble last year. The St. Paul's idea he treated as quite fantastic.

The mischief Boswell must have done by his "chatter," and repeating what he had learned in private irresponsible conversation, is well illustrated by a little incident which occurred in Edinburgh, about two years after "the tour." His friend Temple had written him a letter, in which was "an admirable passage," as it appeared to Boswell. How could his great friend—"he would not say your pious, but your moral friend," give

a support to the ministry which they had not the face to ask "their infidel pensioner" Hume for? This he showed, in London, to Johnson himself, though he did not mention the writer's name. At a party at Lord Kames', where was Hume, a general attack was made on Johnson, and Hume offered Boswell to give half-a-crown for every page of the dictionary in which he would not discover a blunder. "He talked so insolently," adds Mr. Boswell, "that I determined to be at him," and accordingly, and with execrable taste, repeated the uncomplimentary passage. No wonder Hume exclaimed, "Would a gentleman write so?"—a remark which Mr. Boswell reported to the writer of the letter. No wonder that Johnson told him roughly, on another occasion, that "manners were *his* want;" for by this act he had contrived to set several persons "by the ears." The droll part was that he claimed credit and praise from the friend whose private thoughts he had thus unwarrantably divulged. This, however, was a favourite method of his,—as when he repeated to Foote, before a mixed company, an uncourteous speech of Johnson's. "Let us hear it," said the actor; "if no one can say a better thing than my old friend Sam," etc.: on which Boswell maliciously repeated that his ideas of religion were pretty much those of a dog—that is, he had never thought about it at all. This was certainly gross.

His father angrily opposed the jaunt to town—"looking on my going to London just now as an *expedition*, as idle and extravagant, when in reality it is highly improving to me, considering the company which I enjoy; and I think it is also for my interest, as in time I may get something. Lord Pembroke was very obliging to me when he was in Scotland, and has corresponded with me since. *I have hopes from him.* How happy," he

adds, with odd, naïve candour, "should I be to get an independency by my own influence *while my father is alive.*" These hopes from Lord Pembroke the sanguine Boswell seems to have founded on little more than ordinary civilities, and an invitation to Wilton.

He was, however, determined to go, and set off in March, 1775, full of elation, like a school-boy on a holiday. At Grantham, where he stopped, he had an adventure. "I have an acquaintance in Grantham, the Rev. Mr. Palmer, who was chaplain to the late Speaker: he is a worthy, learned, social man. I sent him a card that I would breakfast with him tomorrow, if not inconvenient for him: his answer is just come, which you shall hear:—'As breakfasting will be attended with some inconveniences in the present state of his family, he will be very glad of the favour of his company to a family dinner tomorrow at two o'clock.' What can be the meaning of this? *How can breakfasting be inconvenient to a family that dines?* . . . It is now early in the morning. I am writing in a great English parlour, to have my letter ready for the post at nine. *I have thought of making a good acquaintance in each town on the road.* No man has been more successful in making acquaintance easily than I have been: I even bring people quickly on to a degree of cordiality." What *gaieté de cœur* is here! How enchanted is he at his emancipation, enjoying everything that turns up! He goes on: "I am in charming health and spirits. *There is a handsome maid at this inn,* who interrupts me by coming sometimes into the room. I have no confession to make, my priest; so be not curious." Yet here, no doubt, followed a confession of some sort, over which his editor is compelled to draw a veil. "It is as fair reasoning for me to say that this handsome maid

(*Matty is her name*) argues better than—whom you please. But remember, I am only speculating."

It is to be feared, from his next communication, that the volatile writer had forgotten his good resolutions, and had completely "broken loose."

"London, April 4, 1775.

"My last was indeed a characteristical letter: *I was quite in my old humour.* My mind, formerly a wild, has been for some years pretty well enclosed with moral fences; but I fear the fences are stone hedges (to use a strange expression of Mr. Johnson in his Journey) of a loose construction, for a storm of passion would blow them down; when at Grantham, there was a pretty brisk gale, which shook them. . . .

"I told you that my arguments for concubinage were only for theory; the patriarchs might have a plurality, because they were not taught that it was wrong; but I, who have always been taught that it is wrong, cannot have the same enjoyment without an impression of its being so, and consequently without my moral sense suffering. But is not this prejudice? Be it so." These are strange ramblings.

On his arrival, he was unexpectedly called on to appear in an election petition on behalf of Captain Erskine, but he had not brought his wig or gown, and had to borrow these articles. He was now in noisy, tumultuous spirits. "I am indeed," he wrote to Temple, "as happy as you could wish. Today I dine at Sir John Pringle's; tomorrow at Dilly's, with Mr. Johnson and Langton, etc.; Thursday, at Tom Davies's, with Mr. Johnson and some others; Friday, at the Turk's Head, Gerrard Street, with our Club,

Sir Joshua Reynolds, etc., who now dine once a month, and sup every Friday. . . . This House of Commons work will be good ballast for me. I am little in what is called the gaiety of London; I went to Mrs. Abington's benefit to please Sir Joshua Reynolds. I have been at no other public place except exhibitions of pictures with Lord Mountstuart; he is warmly my friend, and has engaged to do for *me*." This was but another *ignis fatuus*. There was a number of influential persons who had thus "engaged to do for him;" but the truth was, it was impossible to treat him *au serieux*. It is all amusing enough, because so naïvely candid.

On May 12, 1775, he took a fresh step towards carrying out his darling scheme of going to the English Bar. "He has entered himself at the (Inner) Temple," wrote his friend to Mrs. Thrale, "and I joined in his Bond. He was to plead before the Lords, and hopes very nearly to gain the cost of his journey." Johnson, however, does not seem to have favoured this rather rash step, and mildly discouraged him. But the enthusiastic Boswell warmly set forth his roseate schemes, and saw nothing but success.

Before leaving town, Boswell was invited down to Wilton, on a visit to the Earl of Pembroke. He was accompanied by Paoli, to whom no doubt he owed his invitation. Later, he went, with his old friend Temple, to Mamhead, in Devonshire. The visitor introduced a panegyric of this nobleman, when he quotes Lord Pembroke's saying, of Johnson's "Bow-bow way," which added a force to his conversation, and which Walpole thought the best thing in the "Tour." * His ardour

* Boswell must have exposed himself to many rebuffs from his want of tact and, sometimes, manners. As when, in 1775, he brought to a large dinner-party, at Mr. Dilly's, an utter stranger. Later, he

in reporting his mentor's utterances seemed now to flag. He had to confess that he was now neglecting his great friend a good deal, "did not see him for a considerable time, and kept very imperfect notes of his conversation," which, he admits, had he been so industrious as to have written out at large, would have been a great gain.

Feeling a sort of inflation or enthusiasm, when he found himself a guest in this grand mansion, he addressed the doctor in what some might call a maudlin state of mind. The opening is unexpected.

To Dr. Samuel Johnson.

"Wilton-house, April 22, 1775.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Every scene of my life confirms the truth of what you have told me, 'there is no certain happiness in this state of being.'—I am here, amidst all that you know is at Lord Pembroke's; and yet I am weary and gloomy. I am just setting out for the house of an old friend in Devonshire, and shall not get back to London for a week yet. You said to me last Good-Friday, with a cordiality that warmed my heart, that if I came to settle in London we should have a day fixed every week, to meet by ourselves and talk freely. To be thought worthy of such a privilege cannot but exalt me. During my present absence from you, while, notwithstanding the gaiety which you allow me to possess, I am darkened by temporary clouds, I beg to have a few lines from you; a few lines merely of kindness, as a *viaticum* till I see you again. In your 'Vanity of Human Wishes,' and in Parnell's 'Contentment,' I find

asked his friend whether, when he knows that some of his friends are invited to the house of another friend "where they are all equally intimate, he may go also without invitation." Johnson had to explain to him that a gentleman is not to go where he is not invited.

the only sure means of enjoying happiness, or, at least, the hopes of happiness. I ever am, with reverence and affection, most faithfully yours, JAMES BOSWELL."

After the Wilton expedition he repaired to Mr. Temple's home at Mamhead, where he shocked his friend by getting very drunk. Under an old yew-tree, Mr. Boswell made a solemn vow that he would henceforth reform and live soberly—a vow to be speedily broken.

When he returned to town we find him staying with his friend General Paoli, who thus repaid the honours and hospitality which Boswell had lavished on him when he visited Scotland. Boswell's elation at this compliment is amusing. "'I need not tell you,' said the General, 'that everything in my power is at your disposal.' For the last fortnight that I was in London I lay at his house, and had the command of his coach. My lodgings in Gerrard Street were taken by a gentleman for a longer time than I could stay; so it was obliging my landlord to quit them, and all cards and messages of every kind were taken in there for me. I felt more dignity when I had several servants at my devotion, a large apartment, and the convenience and state of a coach; I recollected that *this dignity in London* was honourably acquired by my travels abroad, and my pen after I came home, so I could enjoy it with my own approbation." *

* In the year 1888, an interesting incident took place in London, the translation of Paoli's remains to his native land.

"M. Franceschini Pietri, who has interested himself so much in the removal, is nephew of that illustrious patriot. M. Pietri has given the house in which Paoli was born to the Department of Corsica, and the General's ashes will be finally laid to rest in the little oratory attached to the mansion. In order to set at rest any discussion caused by the late Dean Stanley's error in stating that Paoli's body had already been taken to Corsica, the English

He was, however, in such favour with Johnson, that a room was set apart for him in his house, which he was allowed to occupy for some time. By the end of May he had returned to Scotland, where he began to find his mind "somewhat dark" with "black fumes," as Johnson so happily called them.

On October 9th, however, he announced the birth of a "young laird," named Alexander, after the judge. The truth was, instead of being an occasion of harmony, the event was later to lead to a serious dispute with his father, occasioned by the resettlement of the estate. In great delight, he wrote the news to his friend Temple. "You know, my dearest friend, of what importance this is to me; of what importance it is to the family of Auchinleck, which you may be well convinced is my supreme object in this world. My wife was very ill in her labour, but is in a good way, and the child appears to be as well as we could wish.'

This mixture of elation and depression was, of course, owing to his weakness for drink, as he frankly confesses

Government permitted M. Pietri to open the tomb. This was done on the 8th inst. The tomb was situated at the end of an avenue in Old St. Pancras Cemetery, bearing the name of the Paoli-avenue, and on one of the facets of a monument was a Latin inscription recording the chief events of the General's career and his flight to and death in England. In the tomb, when opened, was found a leaden coffin bearing this inscription:—

PASCAL DE PAOLI
Corsorum olim
Supremus
Dux et Moderator
Natus die V Aprilis
A.D. 1725
Vita functus Londini
A.D. 1807.

The tomb was then again closed, pending the arrival of the Departmental Commission from Corsica, to whom the coffin will be officially handed over by the parish authorities of St. Pancras."

to his friend Temple: "This day the clouds have begun to recede from my mind, I cannot tell from what cause. My promise under the solemn yew I have observed wonderfully, having never infringed it till, the other day, a very jovial company of us dined at a tavern, and I unwarily exceeded by a bottle of old Hock; and having once broke over the pale, I run wild, but I did not get drunk. I was, however, intoxicated, and very ill next day." In an amusing fashion he lays his fall upon other shoulders: "The drunken manners of this country are very bad." He was, at the same time, earning something at the Bar, and during the session received £127 in fees.*

* In Lord Hailes' Reports we find the Scottish cases in which Boswell was concerned. They amount to little over a score in ten years. They are—

1768. Mackenzie *v.* Mackenzie.
1769. Miller *v.* Boyd.
Porteous *v.* Allen.
Town Council of Culross *v.* Cochrane.
1770. Muir *v.* Wallace.
1771. Paterson *v.* Taylor.
Millar *v.* Tremarmondo.
Gray *v.* Reid.
1772. Wilson *v.* Armour.
Scruton *v.* Gray.
1773. Hinton *v.* Donaldson.
1774. Thomson *v.* Simpson.
1775. Logan *v.* Howatson.
Anderson *v.* Buchanan.
Dick *v.* Creditors, etc.
Scott *v.* Carmichael.
Scotland *v.* Thomson.
1776. Malloch *v.* Trustees, etc.
Proc. Fiscal *v.* Murray.
Johnston *v.* Crawford's executors.
Purdie *v.* Hamilton.
1777. Jack *v.* Cramond.
Elliot *v.* Mackay.
Campbell *v.* Scotland.

There may, of course, have been small "motions," etc. In Smith *v.* Armour, a case of "vicious intermission," Boswell consulted his

As he had now been married nearly six years, we might expect to find him accommodating himself to the *désagréments* of his situation. But these seemed to grow more acute. Yet he lays bare and analyzes his feelings so naturally, that it is hard not to sympathize with him.

"My dear Temple,—Here I am, according to my purpose. I came to Auchinleck on Monday last, and I have patiently lived at it till Saturday evening. You may remember how I described to Lord Lisburne the causes of my aversion to the country: it is hardly credible how difficult it is for a man of my sensibility to support existence in the family where I now am. My father, whom I really both respect and affectionate (if that is a word, for it is a different feeling from that which is expressed by *love*, which I can say of you from my soul), is so different from me. We *divaricate* so much, as Dr. Johnson said, that I am often hurt when, I dare say, he means no harm; and he has a method of treating me which makes me feel myself like a *timid boy*, which to *Boswell* (comprehending all that my character does in my own imagination and in that of a wonderful number of mankind) is intolerable. His wife, too, whom in my conscience I cannot condemn for any capital bad quality, is so narrow-minded, and, I don't know how, so set upon keeping him under her own management, and so suspicious and so sourishly tempered, that it requires the utmost exertion of practical philosophy to keep myself quiet. I however have done so all this week to admiration: nay, I have appeared

friend, who dictated to him some generalities which Boswell used in his pleading; and in the printed record, Lord Hailes adds this note: "From p. 17 of Mr. Boswell's second petition, Dr. Johnson dictates." It is curious that this should have escaped Boswell, for it would have been pleasing to the sage.

good-humoured; but it has cost *me drinking a considerable quantity of strong beer to dull my faculties.** The place is greatly improved; it is really princely. I perceive some dawnings of taste for the country. I have sauntered about with my father, and he has seen that I am pleased with his works. *But what a discouraging reflection is it that he has in his possession a renunciation of my birthright, which I madly granted to him, and which he has not the generosity to restore* now that I am doing beyond his utmost hopes, and that he may incommode and disgrace me by some strange settlements, while all this time not a shilling is secured to my wife and children in case of my death! You know, my best friend, that as an old Laird of this family gave the estate to the heir male, though he had four daughters, I hold it as a sacred point of honour not to alter that line of succession. Dr. Johnson praises me for my firmness, and my own mind is immovable. There is a kind of heroism in it, but I have severe paroxysms of anxiety."

Later on, when his son became pressed with debts, the old judge came to his aid, but after his own prudent fashion. "As he is bound for £1000 which I owe, he has resolved to lessen his allowance to me of £300 to £200. I must not dispute with him, but he is really a strange man. He is gone to Auchinleck. I intend to pass a little while with him there soon, and sound him, *or rather see just what attention can produce.*" This reduction of the allowance seems not to have been made.

* It is remarkable that Boswell should have been the author of two first-rate jests, the credit of which has been given to later humorists. One on history under certain conditions being like "an Old Almanac," was Lord Plunket's; and this, about drinking one's-self down to the level, was attributed to Maule.

In the following year, 1776, he was again in town. Four days after his arrival, on March 19th, he set off with his friend on a jaunt to Oxford and other places. The visit to the University is described in a lively way, and is noteworthy as furnishing Boswell with an opportunity for making precise inquiries, on the spot, as to Johnson's academical life. With this view he obtained the most "authentic information" from Dr. Adams, Johnson's tutor, and others.*

They passed on to Blenheim; remained a night at that fine old inn, the Red Lion, at Henley, which, on the annual boat-race day, we always find ourselves surveying with greater interest than we do the struggle on the river; and arrived at Birmingham on March 22nd, passing afterwards to Lichfield, where they put up at the Three Crowns. There Boswell was introduced to Johnson's relations and to the Garricks.

On this pleasantly described junketing, Johnson was much fêted. Mrs. Aston, with her sister, Mrs. Gastrell, a widow, were living at Stowhill, and invited Johnson to dine, but left out his friend. "Johnson walked away to dinner there," he says, "leaving me by myself, without apology. I wonder at this want of the facility of manners, from which a man has no difficulty in carrying a friend to a house where he is intimate." This, it seems, was Boswell's habit, for which he, no doubt, met with many a snub. Johnson, however, prided himself on being a polite man, and never took such freedoms. Boswell was beginning to resent his treatment; when he was soon relieved, and "convinced that my friend,

* This opens an interesting question, which was first started by Mr. Croker, then investigated by the present writer, and later discussed by Dr. Birkbeck Hill, the Rev. Mr. Napier, and others, namely, whether Johnson stayed his full time at Oxford.

instead of being deficient in delicacy, had conducted the matter with perfect propriety" ("deficient in delicacy" is good: that is, *not* intruding him where he was not asked): he had secured an invitation in form for his friend, and the invitation ran: "Mrs. Gastrell, at the Lower House, on Stowhill, desires Mr. Boswell's company to dinner at two." Now, this was good-natured and thoughtful on the part of Johnson, as well as on the part of the lady. But it looks as if Boswell could not pass over the original affront of not asking him on his own merits, and, with the unhappy pettiness and lack of propriety, which so often affected him, he took this mode of marking his displeasure: "I was not informed till afterwards *that Mrs. Gastrell's husband was the clergyman who with Gothic barbarity cut down Shakespeare's mulberry tree*, and, as Dr. Johnson told me, did it to vex his neighbours. His lady, I have reason to believe, on the same authority, participated in the guilt of what enthusiasts of our immortal bard deemed a sort of sacrilege." Mr. Boswell seems to hint that had he known of the "sacrilege" he would not have put foot in her house! This seems extraordinary.

They now set off for Dr. Taylor's Parsonage at Ashbourne, down which the oft-quoted "Derby Dilly glides." Boswell sketches the scene in a few admirable touches,—again we say it, in a style worthy of the old comedy writers: "On Tuesday, March 26th, there came for us an equipage, perfectly suited to a wealthy, well beneficed clergyman,—Taylor's large, roomy post-chaise, drawn by firm, stout, plump horses, and driven by two steady jolly postillions, which conveyed us to Ashbourne, where I found his friend and schoolfellow, living upon an establishment perfectly corresponding

with his substantial, creditable equipage: his house, garden, pleasure grounds, table, in short everything good, and no scantiness appearing. Dr. Taylor had a good estate of his own, and a good preferment in the Church. His size, and figure, and countenance, and manner were that of a hearty English squire, with the parson superinduced; and I took particular notice of his servant, Mr. Peters, a grave decent man, in purple clothes, and a large white wig, like the butler or major-domo of a Bishop." This portrait is excellent and unaffected; pages of writing would not so well describe the owner and his establishment.

They did not stay here long, as they were called back to London by the news of the death of Mr. Thrale's son. To dissipate their grief, the Thrales were proposing to make a tour in Italy and to carry the doctor with them; and it is evident, from a little stroke, that Mr. Boswell was uneasy at his friend's being conducted by any one but himself. He, indeed, says that he—"pressed it as much as I could. I mentioned that Mr. Beauclerk had said that Baretti, whom they were to carry with them, would keep them so long in the little towns of his own district, that they would not have time to see Rome. *I mentioned this to put them on their guard.* JOHNSON. 'Sir, we do not thank Mr. Beauclerk for supposing that we are to be directed by Baretti.'" In this way Boswell often became a mischief-maker, as here he must have excited some angry feeling both against Beauclerk and Baretti. On April 26th, Boswell followed his friend to Bath, which he describes agreeably, and went over with him to Bristol to explore St. Mary Redclyffe, and examine into the Chatterton controversy. Here, again, we have one of those airy sketches in which Boswell excelled, and which shows his turn for seizing on the latently humorous.

Boswell was always rather credulous in the matter of such impostures. When Ireland's extraordinary Shakespeare fabrication was exciting public attention, it might be anticipated that he would have eagerly and impetuously joined the train of dupes. Indeed there was little reserve in his advocacy, though he could laugh at "honest Catcot the pewterer's" credulity in the affair of Chatterton. We are, however, hardly prepared for this display of enthusiasm. Ireland describes the scene: "As the circumstances attending Mr. James Boswell's inspection of the manuscripts have been variously represented, and as I was present on that occasion, I shall state the facts as they really occurred. On the arrival of Mr. Boswell, the papers were, as usual, placed before him, when he commenced his examination of them; and being satisfied as to their antiquity, as far as the external appearance would attest, he proceeded to examine the style of the language from the fair transcripts made from the disguised handwriting. In this research Mr. Boswell continued for a considerable length of time, constantly speaking in favour of the internal as well as external proofs of the validity of the manuscripts; and at length, rising from his chair, he made use of the following expression, 'Well, I shall now die contented, since I have lived to witness the present day.' *Mr. Boswell then kneeling down before the volume containing a portion of the papers, continued,* 'I now kiss the invaluable relics of our bard; and thanks to God that I have lived to see them!' Having kissed the volume with every token of reverence, Mr. Boswell shortly afterwards quitted Mr. Ireland's house: and although I believe he revisited the papers on some future occasions, yet that was the only time I was honoured with a sight of Mr. James Boswell." *

* "Confessions," p. 95.

Perhaps the most masterly sketch in Boswell's chronicle, as most judges agree, is the account of the dinner at Dilly's, on May 15th, at which he contrived that Johnson and his old enemy Wilkes should meet. The varied comedy of this picture, the knowledge of human character, the genial gaiety and variety of the scene, the abundance of detail yet all essential, have stamped Boswell as a writer of the first class. The old masters of comedy have nothing better than his ingenious device for getting Johnson to accept the invitation.

"I am persuaded that if I had come upon him with a direct proposal, 'Sir, will you dine in company with Jack Wilkes?' he would have flown into a passion, and would probably have answered, 'Dine with Jack Wilkes, sir? I'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch!' I therefore, while we were sitting quietly by ourselves at his house in an evening, took occasion to open my plans thus: 'Mr. Dilly, sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honour to dine with him on Wednesday next, along with me?' JOHNSON. 'Sir, I am obliged to Mr. Dilly; I will wait upon him.' BOSWELL. 'Provided, sir, I suppose, that the company which he is to have is agreeable to you?' JOHNSON. 'What do you mean, sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?' BOSWELL. 'I beg your pardon, sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like. Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his particular friends with him.' JOHNSON. 'Well, sir, and what then? What care I for his particular friends? Poh!' BOSWELL. 'I should not be surprised to find Jack Wilkes there.'

JOHNSON. 'And if Jack Wilkes *should* be there, what is that to *me*, sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be angry with you: but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could not meet any company whatever, occasionally.' BOSWELL. 'Pray forgive me, sir,—I meant well. But you shall meet whoever comes, for me!' Thus I secured him!"

This, as I said, is worthy of one of our best dramatists. The dinner is described in the same comedy spirit. As there were some difficulties before he could be got off, Boswell exclaims with genuine wit, "When I had him fairly seated in a hackney coach with me, I exulted as much as a fortune hunter, who has got an heiress into a post-chaise with him to set out for Gretna." *

* And yet, while admiring and giving him all praise, we feel that when Johnson thought it over, he must have been conscious that he had been the subject of a trick, or that he had been made to trick himself. It was scarcely fair or respectful to "corner" the sage in this style, and, though the result was happy enough, it might have turned out the reverse. There is also another view. It was part of Johnson's high principles not to meet persons of disreputable or unorthodox life; and it is rather an unworthy triumph to succeed in causing such a departure from his fixed practice.

CHAPTER XVII.

"THE HYPOCHONDRIACK"—OTHER ECCENTRICITIES.

On the day following this triumph, Boswell set off on his return home. After defending his friend from the charge of being harsh and rough, he says happily enough: "I admit that the Beadle with him was often so eager to apply the lash, that the Judge had not time to consider the case with sufficient deliberation,"—a remark which, if not witty, is decidedly happy, gay, and apposite. On his return Boswell was, as usual, disturbed by the "black fumes," induced probably by the *ennui* of his situation, which he so much disliked. He was again at variance with his father, and his creditors were pressing him. Much dejected, he wrote to his friend for advice, and was directed to "read Cheyne's 'English Malady;' but do not let him teach you a foolish notion that melancholy is a proof of acuteness." But, thinking he had been too harsh, Johnson wrote to him at once: "I make haste to write again, lest my last letter should give you too much pain. If you are really oppressed with overpowering and involuntary melancholy, you are to be pitied rather than reproached." And this had some effect.

How much Boswell suffered from these attacks of gloom and low spirits is evident all through the progress of his work. Towards the close of his life the affliction

increased to an alarming degree, no doubt owing to his habit of having recourse to the bottle for relief. This, in fact, accounted for those long intervals when he could not bring himself to write to his great friend, who assumed that he was indulging in sullenness or tricks, a sort of morbid shrinking from a particular step, which is indeed a symptom of a mind diseased. Unfortunately, too, his affairs grew so embarrassed that he would have required the aid of the most buoyant spirits to struggle with his difficulties.

Johnson, as we have seen, recommended him to study Dr. Cheyne's work on "The English Malady." But he would have found greater assistance, had he lived a generation or so later, in the admirable essays of "Conversation Sharpe," which contain the most valuable and practical hints on the subject that have been written. Boswell, by way of finding relief, at last took the subject in hand himself, and contributed to the *London Magazine*, of 1777, a series of curious essays, entitled "The Hypochondriac," written in a discursive agreeable style, and which do credit to his literary power. As these productions are but little known, the admirers of "Our Boswell" will welcome a few extracts.

He commenced them in the October number, with an apropos motto from Horace, freely translated:—

> "What will avail the wretched mind to ease
> And much abate the dismal Black Disease?"

and then he ranges over a variety of topics, which only incidentally refer to the main subject of his studies.

"To undertake the writing of a large book, is like entering on a long and difficult journey, in the course of which much fatigue must be undergone, while at the same time one is uncertain of reaching the end of it. Whereas writing a short essay is like taking a pleasant

airing that enlivens and invigorates by the exercise which it yields, while the design is gratified in its completion." After an agreeable disquisition on periodical literature and the pleasure of writing them, he goes on to deal with what was nearer his heart, the disease from which he suffered so acutely—"the spleen or vapours."

"From my title of *Hypochondriack* I would not have it thought that I am at present actually labouring under that malady; but as it is a saying in feudal treatises, *semel Baro, semper Baro;* or as one who has had a commission in the army is ever after called captain, so I call myself the Hypochondriack, as from former sufferings I am so well acquainted with the distemper, *hypochondria,* that I think myself qualified to assist some of my unhappy companions who are now groaning under it. I cannot say that I ever fancied myself made of glass, or that my stomach was a stall with a cobbler at work in it. *But I have suffered much of the fretfulness and gloom, and the despair that can torment a thinking being,* and the time has been that I could no more have believed it possible for me to write such a paper as this, than I can now believe it possible for me to write a 'Spectator' or a 'Rambler.'"

During two years and a half he continued to furnish a paper every month, in which he dealt with the subjects of Love, Fear, Death, Cookery, etc., illustrating each in a very lively and agreeable fashion. Dealing with fear, he has some characteristical remarks, which apply to himself. "There is a religious fear, which, however misunderstood, by the gloomy on the one hand, and the giddy on the other, is, when properly considered, not only highly rational, but *truly agreeable.* The dismal apprehensions that the Supreme Being is stern and severe, should be far from His creatures; and we are

warned against it by our Saviour. The religious fear which I mean to inculcate, is that reverential awe for the Most High Ruler of the universe, mixed with affectionate gratitude and hope, by which our minds are kept steady, calm and placid. . . . I am sensible that this is a subject of so sublime and delicate a nature, that precise precepts ought not to be given. . . . I would only recommend them to my reader's piety in general." But it is more immediately with hypochondriacal fear that he would deal. "Unless it be some extremely excruciating bodily torment," he says, "it is certain that the ills of life appear *more* dreadful at a distance than when actually felt. Supremest poverty and the loss of our dearest friends and relations, from the prospect of which we shrink with dismay, prove more mild in reality than in fancy, and bring along with them alleviations which cannot be discerned till they are felt." This is happily expressed. "The reflection should make us less affected by the thoughts of their appearing to us, when these thoughts are forced upon our minds; for we should exert our reason to dispel false terrors, and in proportion as terrors are greater than they should be, they are false.

"I am, however, by no means of opinion with some, that we should habitually employ our minds in the contemplation of possible evils, in order that we may be less hurt by them when they actually happen, because such contemplation is certain uneasiness, whereas that its objects shall ever exist is uncertain. We should therefore be acting as unwisely, as if we should, while in full health, undergo a course of disagreeable medicines against diseases to which human nature is subject, but with which we ourselves may never be attacked. A potion is taken soon enough, when we are compelled to swallow it. Besides, I am not at all clear that evils, when

they actually happen, will be less felt by us from having contemplated them long before. They will come loaded with a great deal of additional darkness from the clouds of imagination; and if the mind be weakened and worn by fanciful sufferings, it will be less able to bear a severe shock, than if it met with that sound vigour which is produced by security and happiness." There is acute discrimination in this latter speculation, and these nice shadings of emotion are rather picturesquely expressed.

Leaving aside these topics, he then proceeds to deal with the subject of war, which he introduced by a description of his visit to the Arsenal at Venice, and where—"my thoughts rebounded, if I may use the expression, from what I believed, and the effect was that I was stunned into a state of amazement. The workmen, who were there engaged, however, felt nothing of the horrors of war, but only the prospect of wages, comforts, etc. . . . We must have the telescope of philosophy to make us perceive distant ills. Nay, we know there are individuals to whom the immediate misery of others is nothing in comparison with their own advantage: for we know that in every age there have been found men very willing to perform the office of executioner, even for a moderate hire." He then relates a curious story.

"But I shall never forget, nor cease to wonder, at a most extraordinary instance of thoughtless intrepidity, which I had related to me by a cousin of mine, now a Lieutenant-Colonel in the British Army, who was on guard when it happened. A soldier of one of the regiments in garrison at Minorca, having been found guilty of a capital crime, was brought out to be hanged. They had neglected to have a rope in readiness, and the shocking business was at a stand. The fellow, with a

spirit and alertness which, in a general, would, upon a difficult trying emergency, have been very great presence of mind and conduct, stripped the lace off his hat, said 'This will do,' and actually made it serve as the fatal cord." Here we see how well Boswell can tell a story, and no lesson could be better selected.

Wise as were these remarks and warnings, it is no surprise to find that the physician could not cure himself. Year by year the "inspissated gloom," as Johnson might have styled it, deepened, enfeebling all his efforts, until at last he became helpless to resist, or even to make an effort to resist.

His reflections on love and marriage are lively enough. "I had once a dispute with a philosopher of the first eminence, whether or not a man whose addresses have been refused by a woman should think it a disparagement to him. I maintained that he should not, because it is no more than a proof that he is not agreeable to her particular fancy: and he may have a full conviction that the man whom she prefers to him is his inferior in every respect. But it was given against me upon this medium, that a man who has unsuccessfully attempted to please has reason to be humbled at his failure, and other women regard with inferiority him who they know has been rejected."

We may wonder what Mrs. Boswell would have thought of this passage, which she may have never read: "Whatever respect I have for the institution of marriage, I cannot but be of opinion that the passion of Love has been improperly feigned as continuing long after the conjugal knot has been tied. . . . Yet there is no doubt that experience affords sufficient conviction that all the rapture, where rapture has been felt, is very transient. I do not limit its existence to any precise portion of

time, but it is surely very short." In another number he again takes up the consideration of the Hypochondriacal disease, speaking of "*We Hypochondriacks.*" When addressing himself to his atrabilious brethren in general, he would not be afraid of giving offence,—"though I should not chuse to do it to any particular person, as there might be some danger from irritable delivery. I remember hearing a late celebrated infidel tell he was not at all pleased when an infidel wife of his friend, a poet of some eminence, addressed him in a company in London, 'We Deists.' 'Speak for yourself, madam,' said he, abruptly." He doubted, "having closely studied numbers affected with that disease," whether it is peculiarly to be found in men of remarkable excellence; and he had often observed that many even cherish and encourage the malady on this ground, "just as young ladies submit to have their ears pierced without complaint, that they may be decorated with brilliant ornaments." Nothing can be more wholesome than our mentor's admonitions on this head: the disease should be resisted, and company sought. But "people too often ascribe to disease what is in reality *vice.*" He then recalls a passage in Fielding's "Amelia," owning that at the time he was "very severely afflicted with Hypochondria; and I well remember that by comparing it with my immediate suffering I was struck with the justness of the representation."

In his fourth number, Boswell shows with much force the sinfulness of all excess—particularly of excess in drinking! This, he says, is promoted by the seducing taste of rich wines, by the gaiety and splendour associated with grand entertainments, and "by mingling love and friendship, amiable and valuable qualities, with the heat and hurry of spirits arising from intoxication." Who

knew this better than Bozzy? But at this interesting point he stopped short,—"as I intend to treat of drinking in a future paper appropriated to that subject alone."

Of excess in wealth, he is convinced that to have a great deal more wealth than one can employ is to be unhappy. "It is like having much more body than one has spirit to animate, the superfluous part of which is therefore a lifeless unwieldy and irksome mass. I do not maintain that a man is the worse for being plump, or as the French say, *en bon point*." Excess in poverty, however, he also objects to.

"One of the most expressive descriptions of the situation of a man about to die was that of an old Scotch laird upon his death-bed, 'I am half fleyt' (*i.e.* afraid), 'and half new fangled.' There must, in a mind of any vivacity, be a mixture of fear and curiosity; and it is strange that curiosity upon that occasion is not stronger, considering what amazing scenes of novelty are about to open." And again: "I cannot agree with a hearty fellow who said that a man who loves a good dinner, and gets it every day, is three hundred and sixty-five times in a year happy, which he could not be in any other way." He then wonders at the low personal estimation, if not contempt, in which cooks are held, though their work is admired. Tailors, also, are singularly despised. "A man would rather have it said that his father was a blacksmith or a bricklayer." What follows is truly Boswellian: "There is something, I think, particularly indelicate and disgusting *in the idea of a cookmaid*. Imagination can easily cherish a fondness for a pretty chamber-maid or dairy-maid, but one is revolted by the *greasiness* and *scorching* connected with the wench who toils in the kitchen. A French cook's notion of his own consequence is prodigious. A friend of mine told me

that he engaged one for Sir Benjamin Keen, when Ambassador in Spain. When he asked the fellow if he had ever dressed any magnificent dinners, the answer was, 'Monsieur, j'ai accommodé un diner, qui faisait trembler toute la France!'"

"He whose name is last put to a story should first be answerable: and let him have recourse upon those through whom it has been conveyed to him." Here, however, Boswell had helped himself to a familiar passage in "The School for Scandal."

It is strange to find a person, who suffered so acutely from the "fumes" of depression, taking delight in such a dismal form of excitement as public executions. In this strange taste he seems to have been almost as great an "amateur" as Mr. Selwyn. The same morbid fancy or curiosity drew him into waiting on Mrs. Rudd. He cultivated the acquaintance of governors of prisons, chaplains, etc., whose society is not generally in demand. He thus obtained the privileges of *entrée*, and, through the favour of the governor and "ordinary" of Newgate, was admitted to the prisoners under sentence, and often attended them, in the mourning coach, to the gallows! He was thus enabled to entertain his friends with many curious anecdotes; as in the instance of Hackman, the murderer of Miss Ray, whose execution he also attended. Johnson, as he tells us, and other friends with whom he was dining, "were much interested in my account of what passed, and particularly with his prayers for the mercy of Heaven." His feelings were so wrought upon, that, next evening, he sent to the *St. James' Chronicle* an article on his sensations.

"I am just come from attending the trial and condemnation of the unfortunate Mr. Hackman, and must own that I feel an unusual depression of spirits, joined

with the pause which so solemn a warning of the dreadful effects that the passion of love must give all of us who have lively sensations and warm tempers. His case is one of the most remarkable that ever occurred in the history of human nature, but it is by no means unnatural. The principle of it is very philosophically displayed, and illustrated in the *Hypochondriack*, in a periodical paper peculiarly adapted to the people of England." The periodical thus handsomely alluded to was one in which he wrote largely, and of which he was part proprietor. The account of the execution in the same paper was certainly supplied by Mr. Boswell.*

"*Tuesday, April*, 1779.—A little after five yesterday morning the Rev. Mr. Hackman got up, dressed himself, and was at private meditation till near seven, when Mr. Boswell and the two gentlemen waited on him, and accompanied him to the chapel, where prayers were read by the ordinary of Newgate; after which he received the sacrament. Between eight and nine he came down from chapel, and was haltered; when the sheriff's officer took his cord from the bag to perform his duty, Mr. Hackman said, 'Oh, the sight of this shocks me more than the thought of its intended operation!' He then shed a few tears, and took leave of the two gentlemen in a very affecting manner. He was then conveyed to a mourning coach, attended by Mr. Villette the ordinary, Mr. Boswell, and Mr. Davenport the sheriff's officer, when the procession set out for Tyburn, in the following manner, viz. Mr. Miller, City Marshall, on horseback, in mourning; a number of sheriff's officers on horseback,

* The reader will recall the "violent altercation" which this unhappy business gave rise to between Johnson and his friend Beauclerk, and which Boswell says "made a great noise at the time.

constables, etc.; Mr. Sheriff Kitchen, the prisoner, with the aforementioned persons in the mourning coach, officers, etc.; the cart, hung in black, out of which he was to make his exit. On his arrival at Tyburn he got out of the coach, mounted the cart, and took an affectionate leave of Mr. Boswell and the ordinary. After some time spent in prayer he was tied up, and about ten minutes past eleven he was launched into eternity. After hanging there the usual time, his body was brought to Surgeons' Hall for dissection.

"When Mr. Hackman got into the cart under the gallows, he immediately kneeled down with his face towards the horses, and prayed for some time; he then rose and joined in prayer with Mr. Villette *and Mr. Boswell* about a quarter of an hour, when he desired to be permitted to have a few minutes to himself; the clergyman then took leave of him. *His request being* granted, he informed his executioner when *he was prepared* he would drop *his handkerchief as a signal;* accordingly, after praying about six or seven minutes to himself, he dropped his handkerchief, and the cart was drawn from under him."

In 1776 the extraordinary trial of the Perreaus and the notorious Mrs. Margaret Rudd was the engrossing talk of the town. This disreputable, unprincipled woman attracted Boswell, who, as he told Johnson, paid her a visit in prison, "induced by the fame of her talents." He took down her conversation and drew up a regular account of it, which he showed to his friends. Johnson declared that, "he envied him his acquaintance with Mrs. Rudd." No doubt it was a curious and interesting record: and the writer sent it to his friend Temple, with the view that it should be shown to his patron. "You know my curiosity and love of adven-

ture; I have got acquainted with the celebrated Mrs. Rudd. I was sending an account of this to my wife, but, as it appeared to me highly entertaining, I thought you should have the reading of it, I therefore send it. Pray take the greatest care of it, and return it to me by the first or second post. You may, if you please, give Lord Lisburn a tasting of it." His friend, however, did not appear to have relished it much, and Mrs. Boswell certainly would have received it coldly. He was eager now to have it back: "Perhaps the adventure with Mrs. Rudd is very foolish, notwithstanding Dr. Johnson's approbation; judge, then, if you should mention it to Lord L. I shall be impatient till I get back Mrs. Rudd." When Johnson, however, declared that he envied him his acquaintance with the lady, he did not know the sort of intimacy that Boswell had contracted with her. It would appear that he had travelled with her to Scotland, and gave expression to his feelings in a song, entitled "Lurgan Clanbrassil:"—

"O Lurgan Clanbrassil, how sweet is thy sound
To my tender remembrance, as Love's sacred ground!
For there Marg'ret Caroline first charmed my sight,
And filled my young heart with a fluttering delight.

"When I thought her my own, all too short seemed the day
For a jaunt to Downpatrick or a trip on the sea:
To express what I felt then, all language were vain;
'Twas in truth what the poets have studied to feign.

"But, too late, I found even she could deceive,
And nothing was left but to weep and to rave;
Distracted I fled from my dear native shore,
Resolved to see Lurgan Clanbrassil no more.

"Yet still, in some moments enchanted, I find
A ray of her sweetness beam soft on my mind:
While thus in blest fancy my angel I see,
All the world is a Lurgan Clanbrassil to me." *

* From Mr. Morrison's collection of Autographs.

In his great chronicle, however, Boswell makes no mention of this incident. On another occasion he saw fifteen men executed! All this shows an unhealthy desire for being associated—even at the expense of propriety—with whatever was engrossing public attention at the moment.

A very curious incident was connected with this odd taste. In June, 1790, an old servant of Mr. Thrale's was brought to trial at the Old Bailey, and sentenced to be executed. Boswell not only attended the last scene himself, but persuaded his friend, Sir Joshua, to go with him; when the unhappy man, gazing at the spectators, recognized the painter as one of his master's guests, and made him a low bow. This attendance was remarked by the newspapers, and commented on as being unbecoming in one of Sir Joshua's character, though, it was added rather contemptuously, it was only natural in one of Mr. Boswell's well-known tastes and oddities. Mr. Tom Taylor, in whose life of Reynolds we find this passage, thinks a letter which Sir Joshua wrote was intended as a sort of vindication; but it was written the next day, and extracted from him by Boswell, no doubt with a view to "copy." Reynolds, however, proved exceedingly "stiff" and unyielding in allowing his letters to be published, and no doubt refused his sanction on this occasion. "I am obliged to you," he wrote, "for carrying me yesterday to see the execution, at Newgate, of the five malefactors. I am convinced it is a vulgar error in the opinion that it is so terrible a spectacle, or that it in any way implies a hardness of heart or cruelty of disposition. . . . Such an execution as we saw, where there was no torture of the body or expression of agony of the mind, but where the criminals, on the contrary, appeared perfectly com-

posed, without the least trembling, ready to speak and answer with civility and attention any question that was proposed."

It must be said, however, that whatever eccentricities Boswell displayed, eccentricity was rife enough in the legal circles of Edinburgh. His friends, Lords Monboddo and Kames; his father, Lord Auchinleck; and certain of the barristers seem to have cultivated or encouraged grotesque exhibitions of character: and it was not surprising that Mr. Boswell followed the fashion. Among his friends was another judge, Lord Covington, (Lockhart in a private station), who, in the '45, was celebrated for having "got off" some of the accused at Carlisle by a highly ingenious device.*

In 1782, Lord Covington, who had been sixty years at the Bar, was lying on his death-bed, when his eccentric and disorderly life gave him some compunctious troublings. Mr. Ramsay relates a story of Boswell's behaviour on this occasion, which is highly significant of the flighty *mélange* of good and evil which made up our hero's character. "While in a state of depression," he says, "James Boswell, who in those days hovered like a vulture round the dying judge in quest of anecdotes, called one day and found him reading the Bible. 'My Lord,' said he, 'you are exceedingly well employed.' He answered, 'Boswell, I have sold all my books but this, which contains a rich heaven of instruction and consolation. When I look back upon my past life, it appears a guilty dream!' To divert the

* Finding that the Carlisle juries were determined on convicting the rebels in summary style, he dressed up his servant in Highland costume, and sent him out to lurk in the by-ways, as though he were in hiding, with a view of his being arrested. It was, of course, proved that he had no share in the rising, and the mistake was used to gain the acquittal of the other prisoners.

topic, Boswell *suggested cards*. Not content with this thoughtless act, Mr. Boswell went round, describing the scene to his friends. He was dining with Mr. Dundas the next day, when his host seized the bottle, and, with an oath, exclaimed, '*My* life shan't pass away like a dream!'" A curious, though unedifying, picture of the manners of the time.

Mr. Croker, in the recently published "papers," speaks as though he knew that the cause of Boswell's oddities was in some way connected with mental infirmity, and declares that delicacy for the family prevented further revelations. This view, indeed, may be well founded; and this natural tendency would be fortified or increased by habits of intoxication. It would seem that it was to a suggestion of Sir Walter Scott's that Mr. Croker owed this theory of insanity. Scott also heard that one of the reasons for Boswell's numerous visits to Newgate and other prisons, was to make the unhappy prisoners under sentence "laugh by his buffoonery, in which he often succeeded." The "variations of spirits," the "black dog," in short—a theme with which he wearied his great friend—was owing, as so many have found it, to a disordered liver, which itself is produced by drinking,—*le vin triste*, in the phrase so happily used by the French.

"Possessed of considerable talent, industry, and observation," says Sir J. Prior, "he yet conveys no impression of enjoying an enlarged and vigorous understanding. His peculiarities are often contradictory. We are in doubt whether sense or folly, simplicity or cunning, a degree of pride sometimes amusing, or a spirit of adulation almost servile, predominate in the picture he has left of himself. If we find in him occasional selfishness, there is likewise a devotion towards the

great man whom he worshipped approaching to generosity—a determination, never thought derogatory, to submit to rebuffs and caustic repulsiveness with a patience more than philosophical. Mingled with this there was much of real kindness in trying to cheer the solitary hours of his friend. From these proofs of attachment and kindness, if we cannot altogether respect Boswell, it is difficult to dislike him. He was good-humoured, free from malignity, and, excepting when some jealousy or prejudice interfered, seldom unjust to one of whom he had occasion to speak.* His social propensities were well known. Want of candour is rarely among his defects. On the contrary, he opens his mind so freely that we discover much of what is passing there, even when the disclosure is not meant." †

The genuine enjoyment, or "gust," with which he recorded the scenes in which he appeared truly ridiculous, has often excited wonder and contempt. But this plea could be offered: he was so enthusiastically devoted to his work, that it was painful to him to sacrifice any portion, and such scenes were among the most dramatic. It is not every one that can use their surgical knife and cut away the "peccant parts." His great friend displayed himself on such occasions with more than usual vigour and vivacity. Still, what an amount must have gone by the board!

* Mr. Macfarlane, the small-debts judge, declared that it was impossible to look on his face for a moment without being moved by its irresistible comicality and grotesqueness.

† At the close of this work, I have made an attempt to deal with this new and interesting view of Boswellian *psychology*. This inquiry, which I am certain will later be made scientifically, will furnish a very curious contribution to the study of character. It will be found that Boswell, while affecting to make general remarks and speculations, was unconsciously revealing the secrets of his own character.

As we are on this curious *penchant* of his for odd people, it may be mentioned that, in 1779, Boswell met in London that strange, erratic prelate, the Bishop of Derry, Earl of Bristol. A dozen years before, this prelate and a companion had travelled through Corsica almost in Boswell's footsteps, stimulated by his example. When they now met, they had a discussion on the absorbing topic of the American war, which led to further argument on the Irish question of the "Union." With a view to illustrate in some way the point, the bishop had written to Boswell, asking for statistics as to the increase of houses in Edinburgh since the Union. Boswell replied to him in an almost vehement strain, such as would gratify the most ardent Nationalist of our time.

Boswell to the Bishop of Derry.

"Edinburgh, December 15, 1779.

"My Lord,—I am afraid your Lordship and I differ as much in Irish politics as I found, from your Lordship's conversation in London last autumn, we differ in American politics. As I never could believe that a majority of our fellow subjects on the other side of the Atlantic would choose to leave their property at the mercy of the representatives of the King's subjects in this island, neither can I believe that all Ireland, Dublin excepted, would be for a union with Great Britain. When I was in Ireland ten years ago, a very sensible man, addressing himself to me as a Scotchman, said, 'We are bad enough in this country, but, thank God, we are not so bad as you are. We have still our own Parliament.' The noble exertions of the Irish this winter sufficiently confirms this remark. At any rate, my Lord,

I cannot help being clearly of opinion that the capital of Ireland would suffer sadly by an union. Whether Scotland has been benefited by our union with England is to me a problematical question depending upon a variety of enquiries and probabilities. As Sir George Saville said, when Wedderburn boasted of what he had gained by his return to the court party: 'This house knows what he has lost.' Scotland, we know, has lost her spirit—I may say her existence, for she is absorbed in her great and rich sister kingdom. But sure I am, that Edinburgh has been grievously nipped in its growth by depriving us of our Parliament, and all its concomitant fostering influence, and we are now placed

"'Far from the sun and summer gale.'"

Then, turning to the statistics which he had been asked for, he admits that there had been a good many new-built houses in Edinburgh. "To ascribe to the union such improvements as would have happened without it, is an enthusiasm no better founded than that of a worthy old lady, a Jacobite aunt of mine, who said, 'There had been no black cock in Annandale since the Revolution.'

"Let us, my Lord, be satisfied to live on good and equal terms with our Sovereign's people of Ireland, as we might have done with our Sovereign's people of America, had they been allowed to enjoy *their* parliaments or assemblies, as Ireland enjoys hers; and, instead of calling the Irish 'a deluded people,' and attempting to grasp them in our paws, let us admire their spirit. A Scotchman might preach on union to them, as a fox who has lost his tail. But your Lordship is an Englishman, and brother to the Earl of

Bristol. I have the honour to be, your Lordship's most obedient, humble servant, JAMES BOSWELL."

This rather tart and scarcely respectful answer to his question could scarcely have pleased the bishop. The Herveys, as is well known, were strange people, but the episcopal member of the family exceeded the rest in oddity.

This truly eccentric personage must have "increased the harmless gaiety" of his time. But this generation has little idea of his extravagance—strangely enough accepted without protest by his countrymen: "He had been obliged," says Mr. Pryce Gordon, "to quit Paris by the French revolution, and took an asylum in Tuscany, occasionally visiting Rome and Naples, and astonishing all ranks by his freaks and eccentricities. In one of his journeys from Rome to Florence he halted at Sienna, and when sitting down to dinner, a religious procession happened to pass under the windows of his hotel. It would appear that his lordship had a particular aversion to the tinkling of bells. Probably without thinking of the consequences, he seized a tureen of *pasta*, and the sash being open, threw the contents in the midst of the group. Such a sacrilegious profanation of the most sacred of ceremonies, I need hardly observe, occasioned the greatest dismay among the priests and their assistants, as well as the spectators, who assailed the house *en masse*, determined to wreak their vengeance on the perpetrators of so monstrous an outrage. The bishop, however, had fortunately made his escape by a back way along with his valet, and by an ample distribution of his gold, found the means of concealing himself until night, and of procuring post-horses to transport him from the

Tuscan territory, never stopping until he reached Padua, at that time garrisoned by French troops. The Grand Duke issued an edict, 'banishing the perpetrator from the Tuscan dominions for ever, under pain of the galleys.' . . . He had not been many days settled in the Cisalpine republic, when he despatched a letter to Mr. W——m, beseeching him to interfere in his behalf with the Grand Duke, and stating 'that the aggression he was charged with was purely accidental, not being aware, when he threw the dish of horrible *pasta* out of the window, that the procession was passing.' . . . He commented on the state of things and the imbecility of the government, indulging in his naturally satirical humour. This barefaced impudence of a '*maudit prêtre Anglais*,' who had taken refuge in an enemy's country, 'after escaping from the galleys in another,' raised the indignation of the French commandant, who gave orders for the arrest of the hoary culprit, denounced him as a spy, and threatened him with the guillotine. . . . But, as the bishop was well known to be rich, the governor contented himself in the mean time with placing his prisoner under *surveillance* at his hotel, making him pay an *amende* of five thousand francs for the good of the state, and directing him to furnish daily a dinner of six covers for the maintenance of a guard which was placed over him, and a sentinel posted at his door. This strict durance continued for several months, during which his reverence lived like a prince, and had the honour of entertaining very frequently the commandant and other officers of rank. His finances, however, began to dwindle, and he saw no end to his confinement. In this dilemma he began to entertain hopes of his release by the never-failing means of a *golden* key, and marked the officer who had

charge of his person as a fit instrument. Accordingly, he soon found an opportunity of a private audience with this Cerberus, when he proffered a reward of five hundred louis by a draft on his banker at Paris, on condition that he would procure his enlargement, besides paying all the expenses of his transport to Trieste. Without waiting for a reply to these proposals, he pulled out a purse containing fifty sequins, and put it into the hands of his *caro amico*. It is not to be supposed that a wretched Italian subaltern could refuse such a bribe." So he escaped.

Unluckily the ill feeling between Boswell and his father was now to be more inflamed by angry discussions on the point of family settlement, before alluded to, in which Boswell was foolishly opposed to his father's wishes. The worthy old judge was anxious to resettle his estate, and to entail it so that it should descend to heirs general, both male and female, which was according to the usual practice of his country. But the son was seized with fantastic scruples; he had a fancy for excluding the females to a certain extent; it pressed on his conscience. Accordingly he set on foot a vehement opposition; wearied all his friends and correspondents with his doubts. After all, it would seem that he had no power to interfere, having, as he says, "in a moment of phrenzy parted with his rights" to his father. Dr. Johnson, Lord Hailes, and others were appealed to, and gave excellent advice; but, for a long time, Mr. Boswell was obstinate, taking a sort of pride in this obstruction. "It was assuredly," says Mr. Ramsay, "one of the cruellest mortifications he could have met with in the evening of his life, to see his son entirely under the influence of a Tory and a high Churchman, who, to use his own phrase on another

occasion, was 'as narrow as the neck of a vinegar cruet.'"

In this discussion, which he records at length, Boswell kept out of his reader's sight what was his father's chief object, and what may have been the foundation of his own opposition, and this was his resolve to place the estate beyond the power of his spendthrift heir to waste, or part with. It is a most characteristic document.* At last Boswell prudently

* A large portion is quoted by Dr. Rogers, in his "Memoir," p. 107:—"'I ALEXANDER BOSWEL of Auchinleck Esquire one of the Senators of the College of Justice considering that having long intended to make a full settlement of my estate, but which I have put off a long time, not having fallen upon a plan which gave me satisfaction, notwithstanding I have seen a multiplicity of settlements, I am now come to the resolution to execute what follows, which though it appears to me better calculated to answer the ends of a family settlement, and to be more free from objections than others I have seen, I am conscious is not exempt from faults, for I see them. But when one is providing for futurity it is impossible to obviate all inconveniences. I have, however, chose this form as appearing to me subject to the fewest. The Settlement I am to make is a Taillie or Deed of Entail intended to be perpetual, which notwithstanding the prejudices of the ignorant and dissipated part of mankind to the contrary I have always approved of, if properly devised. My motive to it is not the preservation of my name and memory, for I know that after death our places here know us no more. But my motives are that the strength of the happy constitution with which this kingdom is blest, depends in a great measure upon there being kept up a proper number of Gentlemen's families of independent fortunes. It was this which at first introduced the right of primogeniture amongst us, a right well adapted to the good of the younger as well as the eldest, as it prevents estates crumbling down by division into morsels. It enables the several successive heirs to educate their whole children properly, and thereby fit them for different employments, so that these families are useful nurseries. On the other hand a danger arises from an accumulation of different estates into the hands of overgrown rich men. Again the estate which I have, though not great, is sufficient for answering all the reasonable expenses of a gentleman's family and is situate in an agreeable country with the people of which I and my worthy predecessors have had the happiness to live in great friendship, which I hope shall always be the case with those that

determined to yield, and the settlement was happily executed.

succeed me; and the place of residence has many uncommon beauties and conveniences, which several considerations would make any wise man careful to preserve such an estate. But as an heir may happen to get it who by weakness or extravagance would soon put an end to it, I cannot think any wise man will condemn me if while I allow the heirs of Taillie every power which a man of judgment would wish to exercise, I restrain them only from acting foolishly. If a person saw his next heir a weak foolish and extravagant person he would justly be censured if in place of giving his estate to his other children, or bestowing it upon some worthy friend who would make a proper use of it, he let it drop into the hands of a person who had nothing to recommend him but the legal character of an heir who directly on his succession would let it fly. I say he would justly be censured for this unless he laid that unhappy heir under proper restraints. And if this would be an advisable precaution to follow where the person is seen, it must be equally so whenever an heir happens to exist of that unhappy disposition at any period however remote, for no time can come when any reasonable man can think it would be beneficial to allow a person to act foolishly, do therefore hereby,—with the special advice and consent of James Boswell, Esquire, Advocate, younger of Auchinleck my eldest son, and under these impressions and in the hope and belief that I have fallen on a method of preventing children from being independent of their parents and of securing a proper provision for younger children, not only at first, which is all that is commonly done, but in all future times, the want of which appeared to me the most solid objection to Taillies—give, grant, and dispose heretably and Irredeemably to myself and the heirs male procreated and to be procreated of my body whom failing the lands of Auchinleck to Dr. John Boswell physician in Edinburgh my brother german and the heirs male lawfully procreated or to be procreated of his body, whom failing to Claude Boswell of Balmuto Esquire advocate, only son of the deceast John Boswell of Balmuto who was the only brother of the deceast Mr. James Boswell of Auchinleck advocate my father and the heirs male lawfully procreated or to be procreated of the body of the said Claude Boswell, whom failing to the heirs whatsoever lawfully procreated or to be procreated of my body whom failing, to my own nearest heirs whatsoever descended of the body of Thomas Boswell of Auchinleck my predecessor, whom all failing to my own nearest heirs and assignies whatsoever—the eldest heir female and the descendants of her body always excluding heirs portioners and succeeding still without division, throughout the whole course of succession of heirs whatsoever as well as heirs of provision.'

He was enabled to announce, towards the end of the year, that he was on the best terms with Lord Auchinleck, who, he adds naively enough, had paid a very large debt for him. He had now another son born, David, "a sickly infant," but who died in the April of the following year, 1777. The good Johnson was glad to hear of the birth, and unwearied in giving him kind and sensible advice.

"I am much pleased to hear of the re-establishment of kindness between you and your father. Cultivate his paternal tenderness as much as you can. To live at variance at all is uncomfortable, and variance with a father is still more uncomfortable. Besides that, in the

"After excluding from the succession," goes on Dr. Rogers, "all *fatuous* persons, and regulating annuities for female and younger children, Lord Auchinleck proceeds to guard against the extinction of the family name.

"'It is hereby,' he adds, 'specially provided and declared That in case any of the heirs male of my body who shall succeed to my said lands and estate shall also succeed to a peerage or to any other estate entailed under such conditions as may restrain the heir from carrying my name and arms then and in every such case the person so succeeding to the said peerage or other such entailed estate when he is possessed of my said estate or succeeding to my estate when having right to such peerage or possessed of such other entailed estate shall forfeit all right and title to my said lands and estate and that not only for himself but also for his apparent heir and for all the apparent heirs of such an apparent heir in a direct line downwards whether in a nearer or remoter degree and my said estate shall devolve and belong to the next heir of Taillie though descending of the body of the person excluded or of his apparent heir in the same manner as if the person excluded and all the apparent heirs in the said peerage were naturally dead.'"

This seems an extraordinary legal document. The old judge sketches his spendthrift son, and candidly declares that he has taken all the precautions he can against the result of his extravagance. We are hardly surprised to find that these strokes at his son caused the judge to overlook the legal, binding force of the provisions; and that, long after, the act was set aside by the courts as void, owing to some formality being overlooked.

whole dispute you have the wrong side; at least, you gave the first provocations, and some of them very offensive. Let it now be all over. As you have no reason to think that your new mother has shown you any foul play, treat her with respect, and with some degree of confidence; this will secure your father. When once a discordant family has felt the pleasure of peace, they will not willingly lose it." Presently, we find him announcing that he is going to stay with his father for a fortnight. "It is better not to be there very long at one time," he adds. "But frequent renewals of attentions are agreeable to him." Boswell was partial to little devices of this kind. He had now a family of three children—Alexander, Veronica, and Euphemia. In July he took his uncle, Dr. Boswell's house—a villa with a garden, close to Edinburgh—for change of air. As his wife's health was beginning to mend, he soon became restless again. He had determined to deny himself London, but he must make some sort of expedition with his friend. He would like to see the cathedral at Carlisle. A greater and more astonishing scheme was actually present to the mind of the intrepid old sage—now sixty-eight—viz. of going up the Baltic, but Boswell hung back, no doubt on account of the expense. He later regretted it, for he thought bitterly of how they might have been presented to the Empress Catherine, to the King of Sweden, and other personages. Here Mr. Boswell would have figured conspicuously. "This reflection may be thought too visionary by the more sedate and cold-blooded of my readers; but I own I frequently indulge it with an earnest unavailing regret."

In 1777, Johnson was going on a less pretentious excursion to his friend, Dr. Taylor, at Ashbourne, who,

at his request, also invited down Boswell. He arrived on September 14, 1777, when they spent an agreeable time. They made various "jaunts" to Derby, to Keddlestone, Lord Scarsdale's seat, and other places of interest. On this occasion the amiable Boswell exerted himself to please, with more than his usual success, and, though he occasionally broke out into some absurd extravagance, Johnson was really grateful to him. Yet poor Boswell, after all his exertions, would hardly have relished the account which his friend wrote of him to Mrs. Thrale: "Boswell has spent more money than he expected, and I must supply him with part of his expenses home. . . . Boswell is gone (from Ashbourne), and is, I hope, pleased that he has been here: though to look on anything with pleasure is not very common. He has been gay and good-humoured in his usual way." It was mortifying enough to be shown as thus borrowing from his friend, who, having no money, had to borrow for Boswell from the Thrales. But what must he have said when he read in print the contemptuous phrase with which the letter concludes, "*'Tis a pity he has not a better bottom*"? Still more extraordinary is it to find that Boswell borrowed this uncomplimentary description of himself from the work of his enemy, Mrs. Piozzi, and gave it a place in his own book!

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN ATTENDANCE ON JOHNSON.

1778.

As Mrs. Boswell's health was failing, Johnson gave her husband the good advice to be kind to her, and bring her up to London for a change. He even offered to give her his own rooms; though it may be imagined the poor lady would not have been very comfortable in Johnson's strange *menagerie*. Boswell, however, put the proposal aside lightly: "My wife, who is, I thank God, a deal better, is much obliged to you for your very polite and courteous offer of your apartment; but, if she goes to London, it will be best for her to have lodgings in the more airy vicinity of Hyde Park. I, however, doubt much if I shall be able to prevail with her to accompany me to the metropolis; for she is so different from you and me, that she dislikes travelling, and she is so anxious about her children, that she thinks she should be unhappy if at a distance from them. She therefore wishes rather to go to some country place in Scotland, where she can have the children with her. I purpose being in London about the 20th of next month, as I think it creditable to appear in the House of Lords as one of Douglas's counsel, in the great and last competition between the Duke of Hamilton and him." On

March 18, 1778, he arrived in town, but found his friend out at Streatham, staying with the Thrales. It was as extraordinary as unbecoming, the dislike that Boswell always displayed to these hospitable people. They had already shown him much attention at Bath, and now invited him to stay with them,—yet at dinner, on the first day, he could thus discourteously correct the lady of the house. She spoke of "'The story told you by the old *woman*.'—'Now, Madam,' said I, 'give me leave to catch you in the fact: it was not an old *woman*, but an old *man*, whom I mentioned as having told me this.' I presumed to take an opportunity, in presence of Johnson, of shewing this lively lady how ready she was, unintentionally, to deviate from exact authenticity of narration." The same tone was maintained through the visit, Boswell being no doubt encouraged by Johnson's half-jocose rebukes to the "airy lady" for her exaggerations, and good spirits. Johnson, however, was an old friend, and a privileged person. Long after, when publishing his report of the conversation, and speaking of Johnson's denunciation of the lady's exaggerations, Boswell added rather grossly, "Had he lived to read what Mrs. Piozzi and Sir John Hawkins have related concerning himself, how much would he have found his observation illustrated!"

Miss Burney gives a singular sketch of our hero at Streatham, which proves with what indifference to comment or ridicule he was prosecuting his office of reporter. After noting that his Quixotic pursuit of General Paoli, joined to the tour to the Hebrides with Dr. Johnson, made him an object of considerable attention, she describes his appearance and manners: "He spoke the Scotch accent strongly, though by no means so as to affect, even slightly, his intelligibility to an

English ear. He had an odd mock solemnity of tone and manner, that he had acquired imperceptibly from constantly thinking of and imitating Dr. Johnson; whose own solemnity, nevertheless, far from mock, was the result of pensive rumination. There was, also, something slouching in the gait and dress of Mr. Boswell, that wore an air, ridiculously enough, of purporting to personify the same model. His clothes were always too large for him; his hair, or wig, was constantly in a state of negligence; and he never for a moment sat still or upright upon a chair. Every look and movement displayed either intentional or involuntary imitation. Yet certainly it was not meant as caricature; for his heart, almost even to idolatry, was in his reverence of Dr. Johnson.

"Dr. Burney was often surprised that this kind of farcical similitude escaped the notice of the Doctor, but attributed his missing it to a high superiority over any such suspicion, as much as to his near-sightedness; for fully was Dr. Burney persuaded, that had any detection of such imitation taken place, Dr. Johnson, who generally treated Mr. Boswell as a school boy, whom, without the smallest ceremony, he pardoned or rebuked, alternately, would so indignantly have been provoked, as to have instantaneously inflicted upon him some mark of his displeasure. And equally he was persuaded that Mr. Boswell, however shocked and even inflamed in receiving it, would soon, from his deep veneration, have thought it justly incurred; and, after a day or two of pouting and sullenness, would have compromised the matter by one of his customary simple apologies, of 'Pray, Sir, forgive me!' Dr. Johnson, though often irritated by the officious importunity of Mr. Boswell, was really touched by his attachment."

The lady of the house, though glad to receive him, with other amusing or eccentric guests, seems to have returned his dislike. In her little book of "Anecdotes" she expresses her contempt of his practice of "settling down steadily," note-book in hand, to record the doctor's utterances, which must have been disagreeable to any hostess. It must have been an odd spectacle at social meetings to find a person so engaged; and it is curious that we do not find it noticed. During the course of his attendance, Boswell was to receive some very rude attacks and buffets from his friend, who was beginning to suffer acutely from his many maladies, and was not inclined to restrain his impatience at the pertinacity of his follower. These rudenesses, it must be said, were received with unflagging good temper and patience. It will be said that this was owing to the "sycophantic" nature of the man; but it is evident he was deeply hurt by such treatment, and tried as hard as he could to make every allowance for the rough temper of his friend. It was a curious insensibility that could have led to his actually printing these rebuffs at length; but his enthusiasm for his work, and the reluctance to lose a good point, was his reason. Johnson must have been often annoyed by his admirer's behaviour, but was even more put out by the ineptitude with which the offender fancied he mended matters.*

But what Johnson always particularly resented was Boswell's trying to pit him against some person in the company, and "getting up" a dispute with a view of producing a heated or dramatic controversy to furnish

* Perhaps the most absurd of the absurd questions put to him by his follower, was how he would treat a newly born baby! He pressed him with innumerable questions on this topic: "I would not *coddle* it, sir," Johnson answered, with much good humour.

"copy." In this he occasionally succeeded too well, and Johnson, having indulged in some unbecoming outburst, would naturally turn on his henchman, and lay the blame on him. "'I know nothing,' he would say; 'more offensive than repeating what one knows to be foolish things, by way of continuing a dispute, to see what a man will answer,—to make him your butt!' (angrier still.) BOSWELL. 'My dear Sir, I had no such intention as you seem to suspect; I had not indeed. Might not this nobleman have felt everything "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable," as Hamlet says?' JOHNSON. 'Nay, if you are to bring in *gabble*, I'll talk no more.' My readers will decide upon this dispute."

One evening in 1769, in presence of "a pretty large circle," the subject of vapour baths being introduced, Johnson had "pooh-poohed" the notion, when "one of the company"—certainly Boswell—attempted to defend the system. The doctor turned on him, "Well, sir, go and get thyself fumigated, and be sure that the steam be directed to thy head: *for that is the peccant part!*" This, the victim tells us with some ruefulness, "produced a triumphant roar of laughter from the motley assembly of philosophers, printers, and dependants, male and female." * But on many occasions—many more,

* This relish of a good situation, even though it made Boswell ridiculous, suggests a story told in Reynolds's diverting "Memoirs." That humorist had been invited to a dinner by Miles Peter Andrews, to meet a number of sober city men, bankers and others. His host warned him solemnly to restrain his wit, especially at *his* expense, as he wished to preserve his sober character with these magnates. The dinner flagged, and was a failure. No one talked: when, in a sort of desperation, Reynolds struck in—to the horror of his friend—with a sly jest on the forbidden subject. To his astonishment the bankers were delighted. He tried another in the same style. The host was so pleased, that he eagerly invited him to continue: "Tell them, my dear Reynolds, that capital story about me,"—an incident in which he cut a ridiculous figure.

indeed, than Boswell has ventured to record—Johnson, irritated by his flippancy or freedom, turned on his faithful henchman, and "tossed and gored" him for the amusement of the company. Some of the attacks were very coarse and gross, and full of coarse ridicule. Once, during "The Tour," when the doctor began, "If I kept a seraglio," poor Boswell was so tickled at the notion that he laughed aloud; on which his friend turned on him, and "instantly retaliated with such sarcastic wit, *such a variety of degrading images, of every one of which I was the object*, etc." Forcible as is this description, it is unique to find any one recording such a thing of himself. Boswell, however, brought these attacks on himself, by pressing his friend on points which tact or good manners would have shown were not to be pressed publickly. Thus he once asked him "did he wear a nightcap?" We can follow the stages of the doctor's rising irritation: "No," was the blunt answer. The other persisted, and this before company: "Was it best not to wear one?" The doctor replied sarcastically, that "he had the custom by chance, and, perhaps, no man shall ever know whether it is best to sleep with, or without, a nightcap." This half-sneer, half-rebuke, might have warned Boswell. But when Johnson said later, "One might as well go without shoes or stockings," Boswell, "thinking to have a little hit at his own deficiency," ventured to add "—or without a nightcap," when the doctor, sternly—"I don't see the connection there (laughing). Nobody before was ever foolish enough to ask whether it was best to wear a nightcap or not. *This* comes of being a little wrong-headed." "He carried the company with him." Again, in a discussion on wearing fine clothes, Boswell foolishly said, "Would not *you*, sir, be the better for

velvet embroidery?" The doctor replied roughly, "Sir, you put an end to all argument when you introduce your opponent himself. *Have you no better manners?* There is *your* want."

Sometimes Bozzy would presume and become too familiar. "This season, there was a whimsical fashion in the news-papers of applying Shakspeare's words to describe living persons well known in the world. Somebody said to Johnson, across the table, that he had not been in those characters. 'Yes (said he) I have. I should have been sorry to be left out.' He then repeated what had been applied to him.

"'You must borrow me GARAGANTUA'S mouth.'

Miss Reynolds not perceiving at once the meaning of this, he was obliged to explain it to her, which had something of an awkward and ludicrous effect. 'Why, Madam, it has a reference to me, as using big words, which require the mouth of a giant to pronounce them. Garagantua is the name of a giant in Rabelais.' Notwithstanding this ease and good humour, when I, a little while afterwards, repeated his sarcasm on Kenrick, which was received with applause, he asked, '*Who* said that?' and on my suddenly answering,—*Garagantua*, he *looked serious, which was a sufficient indication that he did not wish it to be kept up.*"

This is one of Bozzy's comedy scenes; and the touch as to Johnson's having to explain to the lady the meaning of Garagantua, which "had an awkward and ludicrous effect," is a nice bit of observation. But how excellently it exhibits his own lack of appreciation; for when he called his mentor "Garagantua," he wondered that he should have looked serious or considered it a familiarity, which it was. He could not understand

that there was a difference in having a descriptive line of Shakespeare's applied in a printed volume and a nickname quoted before company by a familiar dependant.

A more than usual burst of absurdity was this: "This evening, while some of the tunes of ordinary composition were played with no great skill, my frame was agitated, and I was conscious of a generous attachment to Dr. Johnson, as my preceptor and friend, mixed with an affectionate regret that he was an old man, whom I should probably lose in a short time. *I thought I could defend him at the point of my sword.* My reverence and affection for him were in full glow. I said to him, 'My dear sir, we must meet every year, if you don't quarrel with me.' JOHNSON. 'Nay, Sir, you are more likely to quarrel with me, than I with you. My regard for you is greater almost than I have words to express; but I do not chuse to be always repeating it; write it down in the first leaf of your pocket-book, and never doubt of it again.'"

But when he gave way to any ludicrously exaggerated feeling, Johnson "downed" him at once. "I told him that music affected me to such a degree, as often to agitate my nerves painfully, producing in my mind alternate sensations of pathetic dejection, so that I was ready to shed tears; and of daring resolution, so that I was inclined to rush into the thickest part of the battle. 'Sir (said he,) I should never hear it, *if it made me such a fool.*'"

Once Johnson's attack was too outrageous to be recorded, even by Mr. Boswell. He says it was "owing to some circumstances which I cannot now recollect." Yet "there was a very large company, and a great deal of conversation. There were several people there

by no means of the Johnsonian school, so that less attention was paid to him than usual, which put him out of humour, and upon some imaginary offence from me, he attacked me with such rudeness that I was vexed and angry, because it gave those persons an opportunity of enlarging upon his supposed ferocity, and ill-treatment of his best friends. I was so much hurt, and had my pride so much roused, that I kept away from him for a week, and perhaps might have kept away much longer, nay, gone to Scotland without seeing him again, had we not fortunately met and been reconciled."

Mr. Croker learned what took place from the Marquis of Wellesley, who had it from Mr. Sydenham, who had it from Mr. Bright, who, again, had it from his host, Sir Joshua. "The wits of Queen Anne's reign were talked of, when Boswell exclaimed, 'How delightful it must have been to have lived in the society of Pope, Swift, Arbuthnot, Gay, and Bolingbroke! We have no such society in our days.' Sir Joshua answered, 'I think, Mr. Boswell, you might be satisfied with your great friend's conversation.' 'Nay, sir, Mr. Boswell is right,' said Johnson, 'every man wishes for preferment, and if Boswell had lived in those days he would have obtained promotion.' 'How so, sir?' asked Sir Joshua. 'Why, sir,' said Johnson, 'he would have had a high place in the Dunciad.'" This shows that if every man "cannot carry a *bon mot*," still fewer have the more difficult gift of "carrying" a conversation. Here we have the rude speech, but without the point or the colouring. Boswell, however, thought the incident too dramatic to be lost, so he shifted the scene and altered the characters. How differently the story reads in this vigorous pointed shape! "He honoured me with his company, at dinner, on Oct. 16th, 1769, when there was a

very large company, and a great deal of conversation. One of the company ventured to say that the concluding lines of the 'Dunciad' were 'too fine for such a poem—a poem on what?' JOHNSON (with a disdainful look). 'Why, on *dunces*. It was worth while being a dunce then. Ah, sir, hadst *thou* lived in those days!'" This was actually at Boswell's own table. We may wonder if it ever occurred to him that those who had been present at such scene would recall who was intended by "*one* of the company," and so transparent a disguise. There must have been many a loud laugh.

Johnson, however, knew how to soothe and reconcile him. Their reconciliation is dramatic enough. "On Friday, May 8, I dined with him at Mr. Langton's. I was reserved and silent, which I suppose he perceived, and might recollect the cause. After dinner, when Mr. Langton was called out of the room, and we were by ourselves, he drew his chair near to mine, and said, in a tone of conciliating courtesy, 'Well, how have you done?' BOSWELL. 'Sir, you have made me very uneasy by your behaviour to me when we were last at Sir Joshua Reynolds's. You know, my dear Sir, no man has a greater respect and affection for you, or would sooner go to the end of the world to serve you. Now to treat me so——.' He insisted that I had interrupted him, which I assured him was not the case; and proceeded —'But why treat me so before people who neither love you nor me?' JOHNSON. 'Well, I am sorry for it. I'll make it up to you twenty different ways, as you please.' BOSWELL. "I said to-day to Sir Joshua, when he observed that you *tossed* me sometimes—I don't care how often, or how high he tosses me, when only friends are present, for then I fall upon soft

ground: but I do not like falling on stones, which is the case when enemies are present.—I think this a pretty good image, Sir.' JOHNSON. 'Sir, it is one of the happiest I have ever heard.' We were instantly as cordial again as ever, and joined in hearty laugh *at some ludicrous but innocent peculiarities* of one of our friends." There is something almost piteous in this pleading of the affectionate Boswell. Like a spoiled child, he asks for praise for his very confused metaphor, and which Johnson, wishing to soothe him, declared to be "one of the happiest he ever heard."

Again, the amount of mischief and ill-feeling Boswell must have caused by carrying about and repeating to the parties concerned ill-natured remarks made in private conversation must have been considerable. He would thus repeat to A. what B. had said of him, with an innocent air, as if merely to know if there was any accuracy in the statement. Thus, Johnson, who always spoke freely of Foote, had said contemptuously: "I do not know, Sir, that the fellow is an infidel; but if he be an infidel, he is an infidel as a dog is an infidel; that is to say, he has never thought upon the subject." Johnson would not have cared if this speech had reached Foote's ears: but he never conceived that it would be repeated to him as his, by the very person to whom he had addressed it. It seems that later, at Edinburgh, Foote was indulging a numerous Scotch company with some "coarse jocularity" at the expense of the doctor, which Boswell felt "was not civil to me," and observed: "that surely Johnson must be allowed to have some sterling wit, and that I had heard him say a very good thing of Mr. Foote himself. 'Ah, my old friend Sam, (cried Foote), no man says better things: do let us have it.' Upon which I told the above story, which

produced a very loud laugh from the company. *But never saw Foote so disconcerted.* He looked grave and angry, and entered into a serious refutation of the justice of the remark. 'What, Sir, (said he,) talk thus of a man of liberal education:—a man who for years was at the University of Oxford:—a man who has added sixteen new characters to the English drama of his country!'" Here Foote was merely joking and buffooning about the doctor, when Boswell introduced an unmannerly charge of infidelity, and the offensive metaphor of the dog. No wonder Foote was disconcerted. Boswell no doubt brought about the result of making him the doctor's enemy for life.*

Johnson's patience must have been tried when Boswell indulged in what he fancied were clever, original speculations. "Dr. Johnson told me he wished there could be some medicine invented which would make one rise without pain, which I never did, unless after lying in bed a very long time. Perhaps there may be something in the stores of nature which could do this. *I have thought of a pulley to raise me gradually;* but that would give me pain, as it would counteract my internal inclination. I would have something that can dissipate the *vis inertiæ*, and give elasticity to the muscles." Boswell was callous enough to disregard Dr. Johnson's rude hints, and, as Scott wittily says, "when telling them always reminds one of a jockey receiving a kick from the horse he is showing off to a customer—grinning with pain while he is trying to cry out, 'Pretty rogue—no vice—all fun.'"

* In the same spirit, he repeated to Lord Monboddo, who had been so hospitable to the travellers, a rough speech of Johnson's: some one, he said, talked nonsense; "but Monboddo, I fear, does not *know* when he is talking nonsense."

CHAPTER XIX.

BOSWELL'S RELATIONS.

When Boswell returned home, in May, 1778, he paid a visit to Mr. Bosville of Thorpe, Yorkshire, on his road. He always speaks with a sort of awe and pride of this kinsman, whom he thought it a great thing to be invited to visit, and to whose sister's hand he aspired in one of his day-dreams,—"Miss Bosville, the great Yorkshire heiress," as he wrote exultingly to his friend. He had set his heart on introducing his great friend here, and thus ingeniously contrived to suggest an invitation of the doctor to Squire Godfrey. "I wrote to 'Squire Godfrey Bosville, my Yorkshire chief, that I should, perhaps, pay him a visit, as I was to hold a conference with Dr. Johnson at York. I give you my word of honour that I said not a word of his inviting you; but he wrote to me as follows:

"'I need not tell you I shall be happy to see you here the latter end of this month, as you propose; and I shall likewise be in hopes that you will persuade Dr. Johnson to finish the conference here. It will add to the favour of your own company, if you prevail upon such an associate, to assist your observations. I have

often been entertained with his writings, and I once belonged to a club of which he was a member, and I never spent an evening there, but I heard something from him well worth remembering.'

"We have thus, my dear Sir, good comfortable quarters in the neighbourhood of York, where you may be assured we shall be heartily welcome."

The Boswells or Bosvilles—for it is the same name—seem all to have had an odd "strain." This somewhat eccentric Mr. Bosville had served in the American War; and he it was, no doubt, whom Boswell describes (in the "Hypochondriack") as having related to him a curious story of a soldier's *sang-froid*. Retiring from the army in 1777, he made the grand tour. On his return, he formed a friendship with Horne Tooke; and used to drive down every Sunday to his strange establishment at Wimbledon, for dinner, in a coach-and-four,—a custom he maintained for many years. "He gave out that they had made a solemn compact to support everything that was established. He was wealthy, and displayed an unbounded hospitality. At his house, at Welbeck Street, there was a sort of free table. A slate was hung up in the hall, and any one, putting his name down in time, could secure a place. The company usually included Tooke, Lords Hutchinson and Oxford, Parson Este, and others. Dinner was served at five o'clock, punctual to the minute." He used to repeat humorously "Some say, Better late than never; I say, Better never than late," a rather original version; and it was related that an old friend who arrived four minutes too late was refused admission, on the excuse that "master was at dinner." Other curious particulars are recorded of him. Like his kinsman, Boswell, he loved London, and hardly ever left it for more than a day, declaring that "it was

the best residence in winter, and that he knew no place like it in summer." Even when in Yorkshire, he could hardly be got to pay a visit to his estates. When Cobbett was confined in Newgate, he would drive to see him in his coach-and-four, and, later, presented him with a note for £1000. His dress was "a tunic, a George II. wig, a queue, and a single-breasted coat." As he grew old his health began to fail, but his spirit and his taste for convivial meetings remained. To the last the daily dinner-parties were kept up, and, on the morning of his death even, he gave his usual directions for the banquet. "He died on December 16, 1813, aged 69, and was the last known male descendant of Richard Bosville, of the time of Henry VI." Being unmarried, he bequeathed his estates to his nephew, Lord Macdonald, a relation of Boswell's old enemy in Skye.

Another relation, to whom he was much attached, but who figures little in the chronicle, was his brother, of whom he gives this sketch: "My brother David was so lucky as, just at the conclusion of his apprenticeship, to be assumed partner in a house at Valencia, in Spain. Honorius Dalliol, a Frenchman, Mr. Charles Herries, a Scotchman, and David, are the partners. He has been there some months: he is delighted with the country, and writes me admirable letters; he is agitated with generous ideas of perfection, as you and I used to be. He is miserable if he does not make that figure in conversation which he wishes to do: and he begs that I would inform him, from you, how it is that you can sit quite serene, placid, and happy, in a company when perhaps you have hardly opened your mouth." I fancy Boswell stood somewhat in awe of this sober brother; indeed he is always paying him compliments: and perhaps this accounts for the rather perplexing suppression of

his brother's name, when any reader can see who is intended.*

Boswell was, in the year 1780, greatly delighted by the arrival of brother David, who had been driven out of Spain by the war, and was now come to settle in London. He had been twelve years away, and Boswell introduced him to his friend in a sort of exulting letter. David seems to have possessed some of his brother's enthusiasm. He came to Auchinleck, and, before he went away, Boswell devised what he called "a romantick family solemnity," or oath, which he seems to have administered to such of the family as would take it; and David had pledged himself "to stand by the old Castle of Auchinleck with heart, purse, and sword." David presented himself to Johnson in London, who pronounced him an agreeable man, "who spoke no Scotch."

"My brother," says James, "arrived at Edinburgh on the 12th June, 1780, and lodged in my house. We went to Auchinleck in August, and were four weeks there with our father. David and I then returned to Edinburgh, where he staid with us a few days, after which he went to London, and is now settling himself there as a merchant and banker. He is a sensible, intelligent, accurate man, very formal and very prudent; in short, as different from me in his manner, and in his general way of thinking, as you can suppose. But I

* In the course of Boswell's narratives we find many allusions —carelessly dropped—to other relations and connections. Thus, at Derby, Johnson and he dined with Dr. Butter, "whose lady is daughter of my cousin, Sir John Douglas, whose grandson is now presumptive heir of the noble family of Queensbury." As we have seen, he met another cousin, Colonel Graham, at Drogheda: and there were Cunninghams, Campbell of Treesbank, "my aunt Boyd," "my cousin Miss Dallas, married to Mr. Riddick," etc.

trust he is a man of good principles. . . . He says he will probably never make a great fortune, because he will not be adventurous; but he will get what he can by assiduity and economy. He told me that soon after settling in Spain he gave up all philosophizing, and applied himself to real business. He says he found out that men who speculate on life, as you and I do, are not successful in substantial concerns. He is in the right, I am afraid. If you have money matters to transact in London, I beg you may employ him."

That he deserved his brother's praise is shown by the fact of his changing his name to Thomas, "as the Spaniards were prejudiced against that of David, which had Jewish associations." His character in some points resembled those of his better-known brother, particularly in that of family pride, and in a steady desire for advancing himself. This is rather amusingly shown in some letters written from Valencia to one of the Ministers, Lord Grantham, who was a patron of his, and whom he steadily pursued with letters, until he obtained what he asked for. Thus, in September, 1774, we find him writing on a curious grievance.

"Presuming on the experience he has had of his Lordship's goodness," he complained that by a decree of the King of Spain in 1761, "the use of pistols is prohibited to everybody except gentlemen or Hidalgos, and only permitted to them when they are mounted," and a French gentleman had been arrested for violating this rule. "As for what regards me," goes on Mr. Boswell, "your Lordship has been already informed of my book by Mr. Bindley and Mr. Lockhart, and I take the liberty of assuring your Lordship that my family is one of the most ancient and respectable of the County of Ayr. My father has near £1500 sterling a year of

landed estate, besides his salary, being feudal lord of a village and two baronies which have been in the family for a number of years." He then sets out the great favour with which he is treated by the Captain General, to whom he was recommended by Lord Marischal of Scotland, and who "shews me, with all his family as much attention and friendship as if I were their relative;" he is, however, ninety years old, and the judges who "full of malice to strangers" pay no attention to him. He therefore begged for a letter from the Marquis de Grimaldi, ordering that he might enjoy this privilege of carrying pistols. "I have an English partner who resides in London, and my other partner, who is a Frenchman, lives here." In May, 1775, the consul having died, we find Mr. Boswell applying for the post, as being the only British subject in Valencia. When his friend the Captain General died, he wrote again, to beg from his Lordship letters of recommendation to the new Captain General, "that may be of weight, not omitting the circumstance of my having been born of a gentleman." He was gratified in this matter, but presently wrote again to beg a passport, as he was about to travel through the provinces. The passport he begged, should describe him particularly as "Monsieur Boswell, gentilhomme Anglois." He must evidently have established himself in Lord Grantham's favour, as he generally succeeded—though after a good deal of importunity—in obtaining that nobleman's official assistance.*

David, after settling in London, appears to have become, like his brother, a sort of "hanger on" to political patrons, and in particular to Mr. Dundas, whom he importuned steadily, and who made him

* MS., British Museum.

promises, but did nothing; and this unsatisfactory state of dependence and expectation was continued for many years. He died in 1826. Another brother, John, was established at Newcastle, apparently as a physician.* James calls him a "strange man with a curious appearance," supplying this instance of his humour: "He took a ride this summer as far as the Land's End; he was at Chudleigh, no less. But so strange a man is he, that, upon hearing that it was a cross-road to Mamhead, or some such small difficulty, he did not pay you a visit, though he knew that I wished it much, and I believe wished it himself." After his father's death, he came to Auchinleck, but, unhappily, "disagreed" with his father's "new wife," and so went back to Newcastle.

Dr. Boswell, the uncle, is named once or twice in James's works. He was invited to meet Johnson at supper, but no account of his "talk" is recorded. He was a warm patron of Allan Ramsay, who addressed him in some rhymes.

"TO DOCTOR BOSWELL,

"*With the two vols. of my Poems.*

"These are the flowing from my Quill,
when in my youthful days
I scamper'd o'er the Muses' Hill,
and panted after praise.

"Ambitious to appear in print,
my Labour was delyte,
Regardless of the envious Squint,
or growling Critick's Spite.

* Dr. Rogers, however, says he was in the army, and died unmarried.

"While those of the best Taste and Sence
indulg'd my native fire,
it bleezed by their benevolence,
and heaved my genius higher.

"Dear Doctor Boswell, such were they
resembled much by you,
whose favours were the genial ray
by which to fame I grew.

"From my first setting out in Rhime,
neer fourty years have wheeld,
Like Isreal's Sons, so long a Time
through fancy's wiles I've reeld.

"May powers propitious by me stand,
since it is all my claim,
as they enjoyed their promised land,
may I my promised fame.

"While Blythness then on health attends,
and love on Beautys young,
my merry Tales shall have their friends,
and Sonnets shall be sung.

"r. your humble Servt.
"ALLAN RAMSAY.

"From my Bower on the Castle
Bank of Edinburgh, March the 10th, 1747."

Another connection of Boswell's, of whom we hear vaguely as a "descendant of the Auchinleck family in Ayrshire," exhibited something of his own excitable religious feeling. By profession a Writer to the "Signet," he joined the sect of "Sandemanians," or "Glassites," among whom he "became a light and elder, as also one of the many mutilators of the Psalms in metre." He was preaching at the Sandemanian Chapel in London, near the Barbican, in April, 1804, on the text "All flesh is grass," when he was suddenly seized with illness, and expired in a few minutes.*

* It must have been this Robert Boswell who combined with his religious office the post of "Lord Lyon Depute," in which capacity he issued, about the year 1775, rather an odd proclamation

A sister of Mrs. Boswell's was married to Mr. Campbell of Treesbank—a place not far from Auchinleck,—where Dr. Johnson and his companion were entertained.

While Boswell was on a visit to town in 1783, a very tragic incident occurred to one of his connections. He had gone down, on a visit, to Burke's house in the country, when an express was sent to him summoning him to town. A near relative of his, Mr. Cunningham of the Scots Greys, had just fought a duel with Mr. Riddell of the Life Guards, whom he killed by an extraordinary chance, after he himself had been desperately wounded. There was an extraordinary ferocity and bloodthirstiness in this encounter, which seems to warrant a characteristic declaration of one of Mr. Boswell's ancestors, that he was ready to dispute that any one was a better man than himself. The quarrel arose out of a gambling dispute. Mr. Riddell had sent a challenge which his opponent put aside; but, as the matter was often revived by way of reproach by Mr. Cunningham's brother officers, he was constrained, after an interval, to renew the challenge, which Mr. Riddell in his turn now declined, as being too long delayed. Some extraordinary incidents followed. "Mr. Cunningham resolving to force his adversary to fight, and chancing to meet him accidentally at Mr. Christie's, the army

to the baronets of Nova Scotia, on the subject of a badge which they were to wear round the neck by warrant of King Charles I. "It is a matter of regret to many Gentlemen of the order that the use of the above honourable Badge of distinction, conferred by the Sovereign, has been totally neglected: and, as by the nature of my office I am called upon to attend to an observance of regularity and propriety in all matters of honour, I think it proper to remind you, as a Baronet of Scotland, of this privilege of your order." He accordingly suggested the calling of meetings, one in London, the other in Edinburgh, to consider the matter.

agent's, spat in his face: on which Mr. Riddell, with singular calmness, declared that this, being a fresh affront, he should take notice of it, and went home. He had scarcely arrived when he received a letter from Mr. Cunningham, reminding him of the affront he had passed upon him, and declaring his readiness to give him satisfaction." What followed was marked by much barbarism and ferocity. The note coming into the hands of the father of Mr. Riddell, Sir James, "who was under some apprehension of his son's situation, he opened it and read it, then closed it again without taking any other notice of the contents than providing the assistance of several surgeons of the first abilities. The meeting was fixed; they were both punctual. Eight paces were first measured by the seconds, and afterwards the contending parties took their ground. They tossed up for the first fire, which Mr. Riddell won; he fired and shot Mr. Cunningham under the right breast, the ball passing, it is supposed, through the ribs and lodging in the left side near the back." Then followed a tragic incident in this horrible mode of quarrel. We are told that "the moment Mr. Cunningham received the shot he reeled, but did not fall; he opened his waistcoat and declared he was mortally wounded. Mr. Riddell still remained on his ground, when Mr. Cunningham declared he would not be taken off the field till he had fired at his adversary; Mr. Cunningham then presented his pistol and shot Mr. Riddell in the groin, and he immediately fell. The unhappy gentleman lingered on until seven o'clock on Tuesday morning, and then expired." Boswell was so engrossed with this tragic business, the inquest, etc., that he saw nothing of his friend for a week or so, when he relieved his mind by a discussion on duelling. The curious part of the

incident is that there was to be a second fatal duel in Boswell's family, his eldest son later losing his life in one.*

* Boswell says that Mr. Cunningham was his "near relation," but I suspect that he was one of his wife's relations. I find that she was connected with a baronet of that name; and when he was staying with the Campbells of Treesbank he wrote to Sir John Cunningham of Caprington, whose castle was but two miles away, to come and join them.

CHAPTER XX.

WILKES—FLIRTATION—"JUNKETINGS."

1775—1781.

At this time Boswell was much excited by a great cause in which an important principle of legal copyright was involved. His old friend and publisher Donaldson, the Edinburgh bookseller, had ventured to infringe on what was the London "custom" rather than right, by which it was tacitly accepted that a confederacy of booksellers should have the privilege of printing a particular class of works which had long been in their hands. The Scotch bookseller boldly invaded their domain, and competed with cheap reprints. Appeal was made to the Scotch Law Courts, where Boswell was engaged as counsel, being the last on the list.*

Boswell's accounts of his various "jaunts" are always vivacious and agreeable, as he was generally in

* He was so eager in the matter, that he published a quarto report of the case, where we can read his father's judgment, which is marked by his usual quaintness: "The decision of the Court of Sessions upon the question of literary property in the cause of John Hinton of London, Bookseller, Pursuer, against Alexander Donaldson and John Ward, Booksellers in Edinburgh, and James Munroe, Bookseller in Kilmarnock, Defenders. Published by James Boswell, Esq., Advocate. The Counsel were, for the Pursuer—Mr. David Rae, Mr. Alexander Murray, Mr. Allen Maconochie; for the Defender—Mr. John Maclaren, Mr. Hay Campbell, Mr. James Boswell. The case came before Lord Coalston, ordinary. All the six Counsel spoke, and the pleadings lasted four days."

spirits at such times. In March, 1775, we find him again going up to town on one of his innumerable expeditions, which his father and wife always protested against, not so much on account of the expense, but because they knew it was made an occasion for dissipation. With so impressionable a member of the family, and so frail a vessel too, there was no security in his assurances. Indeed, three years later, he frankly told a friend that he had no power to control himself in the matter of wine.*

He had now renewed his intimacy with Wilkes, who, at last *rangé*, had become a respectable citizen. Wilkes, as we have seen, was always friendly, and found pleasure in his company—no doubt gratified by the enthusiastic devotion which his admirer always manifested. Yet it seems extraordinary that Boswell should have recorded in his book so many ill-natured strokes at his friend. On one occasion he describes him as "*a* Mr. Wilkes," which was a misprint, but had a very awkward air.

Many were the convivial parties "made up" by the jovial Boswell, to his own detriment.

To Wilkes.

"My dear Sir,—Mr. Malone, Mr. Courtenay, and I (your old travelling classical companion) will be much disappointed if you do not meet us to-day at Mr. Dilly's; where you will find wit, wine, and *gaieté de cœur*. Remember the jovial song, in which we read—

"'Talk no more of whig and tory;
Let state affairs,
And worldly cares,
Be thought of more at leisure.'

* "Spottiswood asked me what was the reason I had given up drinking wine. 'Because,' said I, 'I never could drink it but to excess.' Said he, 'An excessive good reason.'"

"Your excuse therefore of being engaged to attend your duty in parliament, will not be allowed; and were the call ever so strong, you would be time enough after some pleasant hours with us.

"Your life is already too rich in incident to require another *outlawry* to vary and animate your memoirs. But if you do not come, depend upon it you shall be outlawed by us as a competent tribunal; and as Lord Mansfield is now old, and I, by my admission to the English bar (which you so agreeably celebrated), am now *in posse* to succeed him, I give you a fair warning, that I differ so much from his lordship, that your outlawry shall *not* be reversed. Let me address you in the words in which you ingeniously fancied Lord Bute to address a great personage at Rome:

"'Nil mihi rescribas, attamen ipse veni.'"

To the Same.

"Edinburgh, May 26, 1775.

"My Lord,—I called at the mansion house when your lordship was out of town; and faithfully restored your Cologne gazettes, which afforded me much entertainment. Believe me, I am very sensible of your polite and obliging behaviour to me upon every occasion, particularly when I was last in London. We were classical and gay at the mansion house, as when at Rome and Naples; nor did I concern myself more with your wild politics, than you did with my dull Scotch law.

"I have recommended to the care of Mr. Dilly, who is my *chargé d'affaires*, to get a pedigree of our family authenticated before your lordship; to be transmitted to my brother, a merchant at Valencia in Spain. It is a matter of some consequence to him in that country,

and I am sure you will be kind enough to let it have all due solemnity.

"It is long since I enjoyed the pleasure of your correspondence. Will you renew it with me now? I should value as curiosities of the first rate, lively sallies from a lord-mayor of London, such as those from Mr. Wilkes, which are preserved in my cabinet.

"You did not like my addressing you, 'my lord, when I saw you in private. Having therefore, in the beginning of my letter, paid the proper compliment to the chief-magistrate of the city of London; I shall conclude, as formerly, *dear sir*, your very humble servant, JAMES BOSWELL."

To the Same.

"Saturday, April 20, 1776.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I came up from North Britain some weeks ago; but I was hardly arrived, when Dr. Johnson carried me with him on a jaunt to Oxford, Lichfield (his native city), and Derbyshire, so that I was like a sailor who has come off a long voyage, and is pressed in the harbour; only that I was a volunteer under an illustrious philosophical commander. Since my return to the metropolis I have been so dissipated, that I have not had the pleasure of being with you, my classical friend: for though we differ widely in religion and politics, *il y a des points où nos ames sont unies*, as Rousseau said to me in his wild retreat.

"I am delighted to find that my honoured friend and Mecænas, my Lord Mountstuart, made an excellent speech on the Scotch militia bill; and I am peculiarly delighted to hear that you gave him lively applause. *Et tu, Brute?* may be applied to you in an amiable sense here. Will you make me happy, by telling me

yourself how well you liked it? If you knew his nobleness of soul as well as I do, you would almost allow him to be a prince of high prerogative; because it would be only allowing a large power of doing good, where there is a large inclination.

"Will you please to let me know what morning I can drink chocolate at an hour of luxurious leisure? for I would not intrude upon your seasons of business.

"I always am, as when in the elysium of Italy, dear sir, yours, with sincere good wishes, JAMES BOSWELL."

The two friends would "banter" each other in rather rough fashion.

"I mentioned my having been in Tothill Fields Bridewell; how the keeper had let me in, &c. *Wilkes.* 'I don't wonder at your getting in, but that you got out.' *Boswell.* 'Oh no, I have no propensity to be a jail-bird; I never had the honour you have had [he looking a little disconcerted, as the pill rather too strong]—I mean being Lord Mayor of London; I mean the golden *chain.* I never had the honour to have a chain of any sort.'"

And again: "At Mr. Aubrey's, 19th April, Wilkes and I hard at it. I warm on monarchy. 'Po, your'n old Tory.' *Boswell.* 'And you're a new Tory. *Let that stand for that.*'" This seems feeble enough.

He was now carrying on a flirtation with Mrs. Stuart, the wife of his friend, Colonel Stuart, and which is amusingly described. His friend, Captain Stuart, was brother to his supposed patron, Lord Mountstuart, "whose brother's lady, a sweet, handsome, lively little woman, is my wife's intimate friend: I pass many of my morning hours with her."

Both the Captain and his lady must have found

immense entertainment in the extravagance of their friend. Once, Lord Mountstuart having remarked that Boswell was like Charles Fox, the Colonel said bluntly, "You are much uglier." Boswell, writing down the incident, said, with his sly drollery: "I turned to him full as sly and droll. 'Does your wife think so, Colonel James?' Young Burke said, 'Here was less meant than meets the ear.'" We can fancy the amusement this facetiousness must have caused the trio.

It must be said, however, that both husband and wife encouraged Mr. Boswell's attentions. The next scene is a curious one.

"I passed a delightful day yesterday. After breakfasting with Paoli and worshipping at St. Paul's, I dined *tête-à-tête* with my charming Mrs. Stuart, of whom you have read in my Journal. She refused to be of a party at Richmond, that she and I might enjoy a farewell interview. We dined in all the elegance of two courses and a dessert, with dumb waiters, except when the second course and the dessert were served. We talked with unreserved freedom, as we had nothing to fear; we were *philosophical*, upon honour—not deep, but feeling we were pious; we drank tea, and bid each other adieu as purely as romance paints. She is my wife's dearest friend, so you see how beautiful our intimacy is."

Colonel Stuart had been recruiting in Scotland, and now invited Boswell to travel with him to Leeds, thence on to London, and to other places with the regiment.

Delighted at this new excursion, he came up to London on October 4th, 1779, setting out with the Colonel for Chester towards the end of the month. The irrepressible Boswell, on his way to the North, noted that the handsome chambermaid "was gone from the inn." He found, however, that "there is a Miss Silverton in the

fly with me; an amiable creature, who has been in France. *I can unite little fondnesses with perfect conjugal love.*" They were to pass through Lichfield, and here the good-natured fellow determined to see every one of Johnson's friends, and write to him everything that could interest him. With what zeal and good-will he executed his mission will be seen from his vivacious letter. There is a pleasant gaiety and satisfaction in the report.

"Chester, October 22, 1779.

"MY DEAR SIR,—It was not till one o'clock on Monday morning that Colonel Stuart and I left London; for we chose to bid a cordial adieu to Lord Mountstuart, who was to set out on that day on his embassy to Turin. We drove on excellently, and reached Lichfield in good time enough that night. The Colonel had heard so preferable a character of the George, that he would not put up at the Three Crowns,* so that I did not see our host, Wilkins. We found at the George as good accommodations as we could wish to have, and I fully enjoyed

* Not long since I read this advertisement:—

"FREEHOLD INVESTMENT,
LICHFIELD,
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
* * * *
at
The "THREE CROWNS" Hotel, Lichfield,
On Thursday, the 20th day of October, 1887,
The large, substantially built, and commodious
DWELLING HOUSE
with
DRAPER'S SHOP,
Situate in the Market-place."

The house so lightly mentioned was Dr. Johnson's.

the comfortable thought that *I was in Lichfield again.* Next morning it rained very hard, and as I had much to do in a little time, I ordered a post-chaise, and between eight and nine sallied forth to make a round of visits. I first went to Mr. Green, hoping to have had him to accompany me to all my other friends, but he was engaged to attend the Bishop of Sodor and Man, who was then lying at Lichfield very ill of the gout. Having taken a hasty glance at the additions to Green's museum, from which it was not easy to break away, I next went to the Friery, where I at first occasioned some tumult in the ladies, who were not prepared to receive *company* so early: but my *name*, which has by wonderful felicity come to be closely associated with yours, soon made all easy; and Mrs. Cobb and Mrs. Adey re-assumed their seats at the breakfast table, which they had quitted with some precipitation. They received me with the kindness of an old acquaintance; and after we had joined in a cordial chorus to *your* praise, Mrs. Cobb gave *me* the high satisfaction of hearing that you said, 'Boswell is a man who, I believe, never left a house without leaving a wish for his return.' And she afterwards added, that she bid you tell me, that if ever I came to Lichfield, she hoped I would take a bed at the Friery. From thence I drove to Peter Garrick's, where I also found a very flattering welcome. He appeared to me to enjoy his usual cheerfulness; and he very kindly asked me to come when I could, and pass a week with him. From Mr. Garrick's, I went to the Palace to wait on Mr. Seward. I was first entertained by his lady and daughter, he himself being in bed with a cold, according to his valetudinary custom. But he desired to see me, and I found him dressed in his black gown, with a white flannel night-gown above it, so that he looked like a Dominican

friar. He was good-humoured and polite; and under his roof, too, my reception was very pleasing. I then proceeded to Stow-hill, and first paid my respects to Mrs. Gastrell, whose conversation I was not willing to quit. But my sand-glass was now beginning to run low, as I could not trespass too long on the Colonel's kindness, who obligingly waited for me; so I hastened to Mrs. Aston's, whom I found much better than I feared I should, and there I met a brother-in-law of these ladies, who talked much of you, and very well, too, as it appeared to me. It then only remained to visit Mrs. Lucy Porter, which I did, I really believe, with sincere satisfaction on both sides. I am sure I was glad to see her again; and, as I take her to be very honest, I trust she was glad to see me again; for she expressed herself so, that I could not doubt of her being in earnest. What a great key-stone of kindness, my dear Sir, were you that morning! for we were all held together by our common attachment to you. I cannot say that I ever passed two hours with more self-complacency than I did those two at Lichfield. Let me not entertain any suspicion that this is idle vanity. Will not you confirm me in my persuasion, that he who finds himself so regarded has just reason to be happy?

"We got to Chester about midnight on Tuesday; and here again I am in a state of much enjoyment. Colonel Stuart and all his officers treat me with all the civility I could wish; and I play my part admirably. *Lætus aliis, sapiens sibi*, the classical sentence which you, I imagine, invented the other day, is exemplified in my present existence. The Bishop, to whom I had the honour to be known several years ago, shews me much attention, and I am edified by his conversation. I must not omit to tell you, that his Lordship admires, very highly, your

Prefaces to the Poets. I am daily obtaining an extension of agreeable acquaintance, so that I am kept in animated variety; and the study of the place itself, by the assistance of books, and of the Bishop, is sufficient occupation. Chester pleases my fancy more than any town I ever saw. But I will not enter upon it at all in this letter.

"How long I shall stay here I cannot yet say. I told a very pleasing young lady, niece to one of the Prebendaries, at whose house I saw her, 'I have come to Chester, Madam, I cannot tell how; and far less can I tell how I am to get away from it.' Do not think me too juvenile."

The doctor was, naturally, pleased with such a display of good-natured zeal, and wrote his friend some hearty compliments, telling him that "he was a man who found himself welcomed wherever he went, and made new friends faster than he could want them." Boswell, in reply, described all his adventures at Chester, of which he had kept a journal. He there got acquainted with Archdeacon Law—a man, he believed, "of very sincere religion." "I received the Holy Sacrament at the Cathedral (in Carlisle), this being the first Sunday in the month, and was there in the morning. It is divinely cheerful to think there is a Cathedral so near Auchinleck; and now leave England in such a state of mind as I am thankful to God for." Johnson good-naturedly bantered him on his extravagance. "How near is the Cathedral to Auchinleck, that you are so much delighted with it? It is, I suppose, at least a hundred and fifty miles away." When he got home, he was again afflicted by a black day, and pressed by difficulties; and he began to harass his friend anew.

On March 19, 1781, Boswell once more arrived in London, being brought thither by the business of having

to appear on an election petition, being engaged for the sitting member of his own county. As he was walking down Fleet Street he came full upon his friend, rolling on his course in his usual fashion. Mr. Thrale shortly after died, after having been moved to a house in Grosvenor Square—"I suppose by the solicitations of Mrs. Thrale," adds Boswell, rather uncharitably. Then followed the usual round of dinners and entertainments, among which Boswell supplies us with one of his gracefully sympathetic pictures, full of feeling: the account of Mrs. Garrick's first dinner in the Adelphi, after the death of her husband, with their walking on the Adelphi Terrace, which is one of the most picturesque pieces in his journal.*

"The company gradually dropped away. Mr. Dilly himself was called down upon business; I left the room for some time. When I returned, I was struck by observing Dr. Samuel Johnson and John Wilkes, Esq., literally *tête-à-tête:* for they were reclined upon their chairs, with their heads leaning almost close to each other, and talking earnestly, as in a kind of confidential whisper, of the personal quarrel between George II. and the King of Prussia. Such a scene of perfectly easy sociality between two such opponents would have been an excellent subject for a picture. It presented to my mind the happy days which are foretold in Scripture, when the lion shall lie down with the lamb."

During all this social enjoyment and round of parties, the bottle was circulated, and our hero, carried away by his spirits, was sometimes tempted into excess.

* There is always this embarrassment in giving an account of Boswell's life and character, that, to do him full justice, one must draw largely on his great book, which is yet so familiar to all readers.

Indeed, at this time we have certain symptoms of those habits which eventually cut short his life. He has been much ridiculed for the scene of intoxication which, with such curious insensibility, he describes in the "Tour."

"I had dined at the Duke of Montrose's with a very agreeable party, and his Grace, according to his usual custom, had circulated the bottle very freely. Lord Graham and I went together to Miss Monckton's, where I certainly was in extraordinary spirits, and above all fear or awe. In the midst of a great number of persons of the first rank, amongst whom I recollect, with confusion, a noble lady of the most stately decorum, I placed myself next to Johnson, and thinking myself now fully his match, talked to him in a loud and boisterous manner, desirous to let the company know how I could contend with *Ajax*. I particularly remember pressing him upon the value of the pleasures of the imagination, and as an illustration of my argument, asking him, 'What, Sir, supposing I were to fancy that the —— (naming the most charming Duchess in his Majesty's dominions) were in love with me, should I not be very happy?' My friend, with much address, evaded my interrogatories, and kept me as quiet as possible; but it may easily be conceived how he must have felt.

"Next day," he tells us, "I endeavoured to give what had happened the most ingenious turn I could, by the following verses:—

"TO THE HONOURABLE MISS MONCKTON.

"Not that with th' excellent Montrose
I had the happiness to dine;
Not that I late from dinner rose,
From Graham's wit, from generous wine."—Etc.

There are other signs of Boswell's growing indulgence in wine. He does not so regularly mark the days with his usual accuracy, nor does he enumerate the guests so fully. About a week before this indecorous exhibition, he "dined with Johnson at a Bishop's," whose name for some reason he omits, and adds, innocently enough, "I have unfortunately recorded none of the conversation." Unfortunate it was; for on this occasion, also, Mr. Boswell, his episcopal host notwithstanding, exhibited himself in a state of gross intoxication. It happened that the good Mrs. Hannah More was of this party, and she records, "I was much disgusted with Mr. Boswell, who came up after dinner much disordered with wine." This, then, was the reason for his suppressing the bishop's name, as well as for his having "unfortunately" found it impossible to recall the conversation.

On June 5, 1781, after going to see Lord Bute's seat at Luton, Boswell took leave of his friend until March in the following year. There is a complete silence between the friends, and Johnson, who was much ailing, does not appear to have written him a single letter. Boswell was now in greater embarrassments than usual, but was characteristically thinking of borrowing a sum of money to bring him to London! Lord North's ministry had fallen, and as it was likely that the Opposition would "come in," his head was full of a scheme for obtaining some lucrative employment. Johnson wrote to moderate these wild dreams.

"If you want to know what you shall do now, I don't think this time of bustle and confusion *like to produce any advantage to you.* Every man has those to reward and gratify who have contributed to his advancement. To come hither with such expectations at

the expense of borrowed money, which, I find, you know not where to borrow, can hardly be considered prudent. I am sorry to find, what your solicitations seem to imply, that you have already gone the whole length of your credit. This is to set the quiet of your whole life at hazard. If you anticipate your inheritance, you can at last inherit nothing; all that you receive must pay for the past. You must get a place, or pine in penury, with the empty name of a great estate. Poverty, my dear friend, is so great an evil, and pregnant with so much temptation, and so much misery, that I cannot but earnestly enjoin you to avoid it. Live on what you have; live if you can on less; do not borrow either for vanity or pleasure; the vanity will end in shame, and the pleasure in regret: stay therefore at home, till you have saved money for your journey thither."

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

CHAPTER XXI.

POLITICS—DEATH OF DR. JOHNSON.

1782.

Lord Auchinleck had been in failing health, and for some time had shown symptoms of mental decay. These took the shape of an iteration of his old stories, which he would introduce without *à propos*, or connection, much like the late Mr. Rogers. In this sad state he would sit and vote on the Bench, which, as his old friend Ramsay says, was thought improper. His son fancied that this unhappy state of things "would not go on for long." He was away on a visit at Sir Charles Preston's, when he was recalled by an express with news that his father was dying. He appears to have arrived too late —at least, he leaves the matter a little indistinct. This event took place on August 20, 1782.*

The old judge was much lamented down at his own place, Auchinleck, where he had been long known and esteemed; and the worthy minister of the parish, Mr.

* "August 20th, at Edinburgh, aged 76, Alex. Boswell, Esq., of Auchinleck, one of the Senators of the College of Justice, and many years one of the Lords Commissioners of Justiciary, which last office he resigned, when the state of his health made it improper for him any longer to undergo its fatigues. He was the father of James Boswell, Esq., the Corsican traveller."

Dun, preached a special sermon on "August 28, 1782, being the Sabbath after the funeral," in which he bewailed and praised his patron in feeling terms. "He was knowing and learned without self-conceit. He was strictly religious, but his religion was consistent. . . . He highly esteemed the clergy, and he took a share in the government of the national Church. As a judge, his diligence, knowledge, integrity, and despatch is written in the records of more courts than one, and in the hearts of thousands. I have met with strangers who, upon my mentioning the name of Auchinleck, as a direction to me, have shown me kindness for my worthy patron's sake." *

"I need not tell you, my hearers, of his benignity to his tenants, when old age and poverty has overtaken some of you he has given you an inheritance for life. He always preferred the sober tenant to the stranger, and, to my certain knowledge, in every instance when he found the old tenant, he accepted of the lower rent. His servants he changed not while they could serve, and when they could not, he provided for them." This natural and genuine panegyric is a pleasing tribute to the merits of the departed judge.

Johnson, indeed, seems to have had misgivings as to the effect of this new elevation on his *protégé*, and gave him valuable and wholesome advice, begging him to be moderate and restrained, and not launch out in

* He adds this note: "Oh! this was written September 12, 1788. I copy this with weeping eyes and with a melting, bleeding heart. He once was my friend who trusted in me, and I hope never was deceived. *I lay down my pen to take up my handkerchief.* I weep not for him, but for myself and many others. I write and weep again! O Death, what evil hast thou done! Whence camest thou? The burning candle is a proper emblem of his Lordship, who kept his station, was useful in it, wasted gradually, and at the end of seventy-five years expired."

expense, under the delusion that he had "come into" a large fortune. Of these counsels the "Laird of Auchinleck" seems to have taken little heed; in a few years the forecasts of the sagacious Johnson were more than verified, though he did not live to see his friend sunk in debt and difficulties of all kinds.

In a week or so after his father's funeral the new laird had actually proposed setting off to join his friend, a step to which Johnson properly objected. Mr. Boswell then remained wholly silent for some months, though the sage had held out the prospect of a second visit to Auchinleck, under newer and more favourable conditions.

Boswell to Wilkes.

"Edinburgh, February 14, 1783.

"DEAR SIR,—I did expect that before now you would have sent me a peace-offering of wit, for having *put me in fear* of Dr. Johnson's anger at Mr. Dilly's. But the good and hospitable bookseller informs me that the Chamberlain of the city of London insists that he is entitled to hear first from the Laird of Auchinleck. I therefore now *demand* what we in the law language call a *solatium*, not of shining ore, but of brilliant pleasantry.

"As I am now Master of Auchinleck, of which we have often talked, I hope you will venture to pay it a visit; I will insure your safety. I hope to be with you in London next month, when we shall settle the time. In Sir Alexander Dick's large collection of letters from eminent and ingenious men, to which I have free access, I find a great many from Dr. Armstrong, some of which are very good. It is curious to observe with what fond

praise he writes of you at one period, and with what atribilious rage at another. Sir Alexander, who is now in his eightieth year, is very little changed from what you have seen him. He remembers you with lively pleasure. Do answer my demand without delay. You deserve no days of grace. Pray make my compliments acceptable to Miss Wilkes, and believe me to be, dear Sir, most socially yours, JAMES BOSWELL." *

In March, 1783, he arrived in town, as "Laird of Auchinleck," and found his friend in a sad state of suffering. The old, pleasant talks and meetings were, in fact, about to close, and Johnson's last illness had actually begun. He was in a state, too, of fretful irritation, as when a gentleman asked him, "Had he been abroad that day?" he replied, "Don't talk so childishly; you may as well ask if I hanged myself to-day." Changing the subject, Boswell mentioned politics; the answer was: "Sir, I'd as soon have a man to break my bones as to talk to me of public affairs." The "gentleman" was Boswell himself. I fancy I see little touches here and there in the chronicle which show that the laird was a little exalted by his new dignity.

Having remained in town for over two months, Mr. Boswell set out for Scotland on May 30th. The night before, he made his friend this affectionate speech: "I assured him that in the whole range of his acquaintance there never had been any one who had a more sincere respect and affection for him than I had. He said, 'I believe it, sir. Were I in distress, there is no man I would sooner come to than to you. I should like to come and have a cottage in your park, toddle about, live mostly on milk, and be taken care of by Mrs. Boswell.' He embraced me, and gave me his blessing,

* MS., British Museum.

as usual when I was leaving him for any length of time. I walked from his door to-day with a fearful apprehension of what might happen before I returned."

Unhappily, these forebodings were to be justified; within less than a month Johnson was seized with a paralytic stroke, from which, however, he recovered. With that curious fitfulness which so contrasts with his professions, Boswell seems to have grown rather neglectful; at least, we find Johnson reproaching him—"You should not make your letters such rarities." The truth was Mr. Boswell was now so engrossed with politics and dreams of becoming a leading man in his county that he had little time for correspondence. The death of his father, and his new position of responsibility seem to have engendered in that busy soul quite a new train of ambitious projects, and he began to think he might fairly look for political advancement, a seat in the House of Commons, or a place under Government, etc. From this date there is a general change in the direction of his views; and it would almost seem that he relaxed somewhat in his assiduous attendance on his great friend. With much satisfaction he wrote to him that "the gentlemen of the county had at two public meetings appointed me their *Præses*, or Chairman." He also lamented the way in which he was neglected by his patrons in power. Johnson sent him this rather sarcastic consolation: "Like all other men who have great friends, you begin to feel the pangs of neglected merit; and all the comfort I can give you is, by telling you that you have more pangs to feel and more neglect to suffer." He significantly hoped, though he did not seem to believe, that he was the only confidant of these repinings. He advised him strongly to attend to his estate, and leave these matters alone.

Boswell, however, was not inclined to follow this sound advice. With his new lairdship, a passion for "coming forward in politics" had seized on him. No man was so persistent as Boswell in trying to obtain promotion or advancement, but he was, unfortunately, always unlucky. He attached himself to a series of patrons, though they appear to have done little for him. But Mr. Dundas, Sir James Lowther, Lord Mountstuart, "my Mecænas," and many more, were persistently "invoked," as he called it, and with little result, save that of many hopes held out, and some promises, all to end in disappointment. It is not known how he contrived to secure the friendly patronage of Burke. In March, 1778, he had addressed to him a letter from Edinburgh, in familiar and jocose strain, but hinting clearly enough that Mr. Burke was a man to whom patronage might one day come.

Boswell to Mr. Burke.

"DEAR SIR," he wrote,—"Upon my honour I began letter to you some time ago, and did not finish it because I imagined you were then near your apotheosis, as poor Goldsmith said upon a former occasion, when he thought your party was coming into administration; and being one of our old Barons of Scotland, my pride could not brook the appearance of paying my court to a minister amongst the crowd of interested expectants on his accession. At present, I take it for granted that I need be under no such apprehension, and therefore I resume the indulgence of my inclination. This may be, perhaps, a singular method of beginning a correspondence, and in one sense may not be complimentative. But I can sincerely assure you, dear sir, that I feel and mean a genuine compliment to Mr. Burke himself. It

is generally thought no meanness to solicit the notic and favour of a man in power; and surely it is muc less a meanness to endeavour by honest means to hav the honour and pleasure of being on an agreeable foo ing with a man of superior knowledge, abilities, and genius.

"I have to thank you for the obligations which you have already conferred upon me, by the welcome which I have, upon repeated occasions, experienced under your roof. When I was last in London you gave me a general invitation, which I value more than a Treasury warrant:—an invitation to 'the feast of reason,' and, what I like still more, 'the flow of soul,' which you dispense with liberal and elegant abundance, is, in my estimation, a privilege of enjoying certain felicity; and we know that riches and honour are desirable only as means to felicity, and that they often fail of the end.

"Most heartily do I rejoice that our present ministers have at last yielded to conciliation. For amidst all the sanguinary zeal of my countrymen, I have professed myself a friend to our fellow-subjects in America, so far as they claim an exemption from being taxed by the representatives of the King's British subjects. I do not perfectly agree with you; for I deny the Declaratory Act, and I am a warm Tory in its true constitutional sense. I wish I were a commissioner, or one of the secretaries of the commission for the grand treaty. I am to be in London this spring, and if his Majesty should ask me what I would choose, my answer will be, to assist in the compact between Britain and America. May I beg to hear from you, and in the meantime to have my compliments made acceptable to Mrs. Burke?—I am, dear sir, your most obedient, humble servant, JAMES BOSWELL."

It was in Boswell's favour that he should have enlisted the interest of such a man. On a later occasion, he had in view the office of Judge Advocate, and here Burke lent him his "friendly aid." Poor Boswell, however, failed in this, as he was to do in so many other ventures; for the more powerful interest of the Duke of Buccleugh secured the post for one Mr. Mark Pringle. The "friendly aid" had taken the shape of warm recommendation to General Conway, in which Mr. Boswell's character was drawn in "glowing colours, Mr. Burke being good enough to add—*We must do something for you, for our own sakes.*" This is Boswell's own description, written in the too candid and flattering "memoir" we often quoted from. Though the place was not obtained, he declared "he valued Mr. Burke's letter much more."

Not less unwearied was he in pursuing another *ignis fatuus*. "It was generally supposed," he tells us, in his little memoirs, "that Mr. Boswell would have a seat in Parliament," and he made many attempts to secure this "object of his inclination." He wrote pamphlets, he curried favour with patrons, but no one seemed to treat him as "a serious politician." "My friend Lord Mountstuart" said once to him, "'I would do anything for you but bring you into Parliament: for I could not be sure but you might oppose me in something the next day.' *His Lordship judged well.*"

He was more fortunate, however, in securing the patronage of Sir James Lowther, afterwards Lord Lonsdale, who returned no less than seven members, but of whom he had spoken but coldly in his "Tour,"—a curious contrast to more rapturous apostrophes, when, later, he began to have hopes from him. To this nobleman he was to owe the Recordership of Carlisle, which he took

as an earnest of better things. The new patron, selected by Boswell for "bowing his intellectual knee" to, was a personage of extraordinary wealth, power, and influence. The son of a former Governor of Barbadoes, he had inherited estates in Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Yorkshire, with rich mines and other property. He had thus secured enormous parliamentary influence, and virtually nominated the members for the two first-named counties. He had, besides, purchased boroughs, such as Haslemere in Surrey, and Appleby, where he had the credit of introducing Mr. Pitt to Parliament. With these advantages he was of an arrogant and even malignant disposition, with a perfect rage for legal quarrels. It was said of him, that "a determination to oppress, by means of wealth and under colour of law, all who were obnoxious to him, has been frequently imputed to Lord Lonsdale: and the records of the Courts, the Book of reports, and the accounts of the assizes in different Counties have appeared for a long series of years to afford some basis for the imputation." Having obtained from the Crown a grant of a certain estate, held by the Duke of Portland, he prosecuted his claims with a sort of ferocity, levying ejectments and putting every engine of the law in force. This made him highly unpopular, and was the cause of his losing his seats in Cumberland, which he often attempted to recover by extraordinary efforts. It was said that a vicar of Laleham having offended him, he took the course of leaving his own mansion at that place unoccupied for years, in order that the vicar should not receive any tithes. At one time he was bitterly assailed by Peter Pindar, against whom he brought an action for libel, and it caused much astonishment that, on apology being made, he accepted it. He fought several duels, in one of which his

adversary fired into his own foot. This extraordinary person had, of course, immense influence with the ministry and the Parliament. From being Sir James Lowther he became Lord Lonsdale in 1784, and, later, Lord Lowther. Such was the patron whom Boswell was now extolling to the skies, and on whom he had now fixed his hopes, but who was to bring him nothing but anxiety and disappointment.

On his appointment, the new Recorder was much ridiculed—

"Boswell once flamed with patriotic zeal,
His bow was ever bent;
Now he no public wrong can feel
Till Lowther nods assent.
To seize the throne which faction tries,
And would the prince command,
The Tory Boswell coolly cries,
'My King's in Westmoreland.'" *

His friend Dr. Douglas becoming Bishop of Carlisle almost at the same time, the elated Boswell wrote that "these two promotions gave occasion to the following *epigram*"—of course his own, and duly published :—

"Of old, ere wise concord united this isle,
Our neighbours of Scotland were foes at Carlisle;
But now what a change have we here on this border,
When Douglas is Bishop, *and Boswell Recorder*."

Another influential person on whose "protection" Boswell was counting was the powerful Dundas. He proved, like his other patron, but a reed. Unluckily, his brother David was also pressing his claims on the minister, who had promised the late Lord Auchinleck to confer some office on him. This promise he renewed to Boswell himself, assuring him that "he looked on it as a death-bed one." Yet David was kept waiting eight years, and was still waiting. Boswell gives a

* Quoted in Dr. Rogers' "Memoir."

piteous sketch of his own treatment by this rough being, who was no doubt wearied by the importunities of the brothers. "He is right in persevering, so as to leave Dundas no excuse for not keeping his word. As to myself, Dundas, though he *pledged himself* (as the modern phrase is) to assist me in advancing in promotion; yet, except when I in a manner *compelled him to dine with me last winter*, has entirely avoided me, and I strongly suspect has given Pitt a prejudice against me. The excellent Langton says it is disgraceful; it is utter folly in Pitt not to reward and attach to his Administration a man of my popular and pleasant talents, whose merit he has acknowledged in a letter under his own hand. He did not answer several letters, which I wrote at intervals, requesting to wait upon him; I lately wrote to him that such behaviour to me was certainly not generous. 'I think it is not just, and (forgive the freedom) I doubt if it be wise. If I do not hear from you in ten days, I shall conclude that you are resolved to have no farther communication with me; for I assure you, sir, I am extremely unwilling to give you, or indeed myself, unnecessary trouble.' About two months have elapsed, and *he has made no sign*. How can I still delude myself with dreams of rising in the great sphere of life? I will tell you; Lord Lonsdale, who, when he pleases, has great power in every Administration, shows me more and more regard; and Sir Michael Le Fleming, Governor Penn, and Colonel Lowther, three of his Members, assure me that he will give me a seat in Parliament at the General Election. I do not reckon upon this, but the *peut-être* is animating.

"I cannot help thinking with you that Pitt is the ablest and most useful minister of any of those whom

we know ; . . . if he has treated me unjustly in his stewardship for the public, and behaved with ungrateful insolence to my *patron*, who first introduced him into public life, may I not warrantably arraign many articles, and great ones too, in his conduct, which I can attack with forcible energy? At present I keep myself quiet, and wait till we see how things will turn out. My candidateship in my own County is honourable, though I am between two great parties, either of which could overwhelm me, but perhaps may rather let me come in, by bringing me in apparently, than be defeated by its opponent. You will forgive me for all this egotism."

There was another "patron" on whom, it is evident, Boswell was casting longing eyes, stimulated by the fact that his friend Temple had obtained preferment from the same quarter. This was Lord Lisburne, who had shown him some polite attentions. Boswell often recurred to this nobleman in his letters with compliments, etc., and was eagerly anxious to please him.

Mr. Boswell to Lord Lisburne.

"Bickham, near Plymouth, September 21.

"My Lord,—On my way to Cornwall, to visit our worthy friend Temple, I intended, according to your Lordship's obliging invitation, to have payed my respects to your Lordship and Lady Lisburne at Mamhead ; but I found myself hurried, and deferred it till my return. My two eldest daughters are with me, and, if not inconvenient, will do ourselves the honour to dine at Mamhead on Monday next. I request that your Lordship will take the trouble to let me know by a note, which I shall inquire for at the post-house at Chudleigh. My daughters join me in respectful compliments.

"And I ever am, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient, humble servant,

"JAMES BOSWELL."

To the Bishop of Carlisle.

"Great Portland Street, June 17.

"MY DEAR LORD,—Sir Richard Symons having asked me to a very pleasant dinner party to-morrow, I shall not have the honour of making my bows in Windsor Castle till Sunday morning. My son shall obey your Lordship's summons, and learn from his father to respect John Carliol, as Sir Joseph Bankes calls your Lordship—of whom I ever am, with all sincerity, your much obliged and faithful servant."

Mr. Boswell was now heard of in all directions, making speeches, moving addresses, and printing pamphlets of a rather incoherent kind. The subject of an Indian Bill, proposed by the "Coalition" in 1783, and a Bill to reduce the number of Scotch judges, had no very particular connection with his fortunes or principles; but he seized on these topics in an ardent and even hysterical way, and his friends were to be astonished and amused by the first of his attempts to put himself before the political world, which took the shape of a letter to his countrymen. This appeal was, in parts, a sober, sensible, and well-reasoned production enough, directed against what he called the "baleful coalition." In a few places only does the true Boswellian *fureur* break out, but this was almost as irrepressible in his case as was King Charles's head in that of Mr. Dick. It was addressed to "the people of Scotland on the present state of the nation, and was published at his own expense. A quotation from Goldsmith introduced it,

of which the last two lines were particularly happy in their application—

> 'Till half a patriot, half a coward grown,
> I fly from petty Tyrants to the throne.'"

After lamenting the cold indifference of his countrymen during the exciting question of the Middlesex election, and of the American War, he, at the opening, turned aside at once to introduce Mr. Boswell himself.

"I was one of the few who, as far as my voice could go, ventured to oppose it (the war) as unjust and inexpedient. My intimacy with the excellent and much-honoured General Oglethorpe, who still lives with all his faculties and all his benevolence in full vigour, confirmed me in my opinion; and, when pleading at the Bar of the House of Commons in a question concerning taxation, *I avowed that opinion*, declaring that the man in the world for whom I have the highest respect (Dr. Johnson) had not been able to convince me that *taxation was no tyranny*. My principles being of a Tory cast—that is to say, those of a steady Royalist—*it grieved me to the heart*, that our most gracious Sovereign should be advised by evil counsellors to assent to severe measure against it."

He then considered the scheme proposed by the Coalition for seizing on the Administration and places of the East India Company. He described the indecent haste with which the Bill was hurried on; "the rapidity of its course and its ill-looking appearance indicated its character;" and when it came into the House of Lords the alarm was, "*Stop thief!*" He then proceeded to furnish historical precedents for the king's interference, defending his Majesty's course in the warmest fashion. In conclusion, he made this appeal: "The purpose of this letter is to recommend to the people of Scotland to

address his Majesty upon this momentous crisis," offering his support and attachment. "For my own part, I should claim no credit did I not flatter myself that I practise what I now presume to recommend. I have mentioned former circumstances, perhaps with too much egotism, to show that I am no time-server, and, at this moment, friends to whom I have attached my affection, gratitude, and interest are zealous for the measure which I deem so alarming. *Let me add that a dismissal of the Portland ministry* will probably disappoint an object which I have most ardently at heart. But, holding an estate transmitted to me through my ancestors by charters from a series of kings, the importance of a Charter and the prerogative of a King impresses my mind with seriousness and with duty."

The result of this appeal, which received the cautious approbation of Johnson and private friends, was related at the opening of a far more obstreperous and jubilant pamphlet, of which he delivered himself a year or so later. He then had "the happiness," he said,—"to find my letter received, not only with indulgence, but with a generous warmth of heart, which I can never forget, and to the latest moment of my life shall most gratefully remember. *The fire of loyalty* was kindled. It flew through our counties and our boroughs. The King was addressed; the Constitution was saved. I was proud thus to *ciere viros*; prouder still than of receiving the applause of the *minister of the Crown*, which he was pleased to convey to me in a very handsome letter, upon which, however, I set a high value, considering not only the minister, but the man; *and accordingly it shall be preserved in the archives of my family.*" * He,

* Mr. Pitt was then fighting a desperate battle with the Opposition, but he found time courteously to acknowledge the offering.

of course, forwarded the pamphlet to Johnson, with apologies for taking an opposite view on one or two points. But Johnson, oppressed with asthma and a complication of disorders, wrote that he "must forgive a man struggling with disease his neglect of disputes, politics, and pamphlets." It was amusing now to find that the "neglected" Mr. Boswell had discovered that the principles of his "great friends" were not such as he could support.

All this was in aid of that ambitious scheme to which these ephemeral efforts were to minister, that of entering Parliament as a member for his native county —a truly Utopian idea; for nowhere was he so likely to be appreciated at his true value as in his own district. That want of a "better bottom," in spite of native joviality and good humour, would be a fatal obstacle. He even fancied that he would succeed the sitting member, Colonel Montgomerie.

In the March of 1784, the rising feeling of Yorkshire in favour of Mr. Pitt was causing much anxiety and even consternation to the Whig party. Mr. Wilberforce was afraid that he would not be able to promote a good county meeting; but with much exertion it was got together at York Castle, on March 25th. He proved to be the hero of the day, and Boswell, who was there visiting

"I sent it to Mr. Pitt," the author tells the public, "with a letter, in which I thus expressed myself: 'My principles may appear to you too monarchical: but I know and am persuaded, they are not inconsistent with the true principles of liberty. Be this as it may, you, Sir, are now the Prime Minister, called by the Sovereign to maintain the right of the Crown, as well as those of the people, against a violent faction. As such, you are entitled to the warmest support of every good subject in every department.' He answered, 'I am extremely obliged to you for the sentiments you do me the honour to express, and have observed with great pleasure the *zealous and able support* given to the CAUSE OF THE PUBLICK in the work you were so good to transmit to me.'"

the Bosvilles, magnified his own share in the proceedings, and furnished a description of the whole to Mr. Dundas. "Boswell," wrote the latter to Wilberforce, "has been with me, and given me an account of your feats at York.' "I saw," says Boswell, describing the scene, "what seemed a mere shrimp mount upon the table, but, as I listened, he grew and grew until the shrimp became a whale."

In his elation he wrote to Johnson, to tell him of his "high gratification in the triumphs of monarchical principles in that great county." Instead of going on to meet his friend, he turned back to his own country, where he carried an address to his Majesty.

Johnson at this time was suffering acutely, but was much amused by these proceedings; and wrote of him good-naturedly, though rather contemptuously: "The man so busy about addresses is neither more nor less than our own Boswell, who had come as far as York towards London, but turned back on the dissolution, and is said now to stand for some place. Whether to wish him success, his best friends hesitate." As regards this candidature, he gave him some very significant counsels, which show how well he understood his friend, and the dangers to which his weakness exposed him.

"You are entering upon a transaction which requires much prudence. You must endeavour to oppose without exasperating; to practise temporary hostility, without producing enemies for life. This one thing I must enjoin you, which is seldom observed in the conduct of elections;—*I must entreat you to be scrupulous in the use of strong liquors.* One night's drunkenness may defeat the labours of forty days well employed. Be firm, but not clamorous; be active, but not malicious; and

you may form such an interest, as may not only exalt yourself, but dignify your family."

Having learned at York, or on his way to York, that there was to be a dissolution, he issued an address to the electors of his county.

"*An Address to the Real Freeholders of the County of Ayr.*

"GENTLEMEN,—If my friend Colonel Montgomerie shall not be a candidate at next election, I intend to offer my services as your representative in Parliament. If Colonel Montgomerie stands, he shall have my warmest support; for I have never ceased to think that great injustice was done both to you and him when he was deprived of the seat given him by your voice; and I am very desirous to have ample reparation made for that injustice. Indeed, gentlemen, you have at the two last elections been disappointed of your representation by the unconstitutional means of those votes, which, upon a notice that I glory in having made, were, at a meeting of this county, 29th October, 1782, declared to be *nominal* and *fictitious*.

"Colonel Montgomerie and I will probably at no time be on different sides. We are both connected with the respectable old interest of the county; and I trust we should both be exceedingly sorry to hurt it by a division, of which its enemies are eagerly watchful to take advantage.

"I pledge my word and honour that if there is not a greater number of the *real freeholders* for me than for any other candidate, I shall retire from the contest. I disdain to avail myself of what I condemn; and I am not callous enough to bear the indignant and reproachful looks of my worthy neighbours, who would consider

that, by an artful use of the letter of that law which so loudly calls for reformation, I had triumphed over their wishes, and annihilated their most valuable privileges.

"My political principles I have avowed, in the most direct and public manner, to be those of a steady Royalist, who reveres monarchy, but is at the same time animated with genuine feelings of liberty; principles which, when well understood, are not in any degree inconsistent, but are happily united in the true British Constitution.

"The confidences with which I have been honoured by many of you in my profession as a lawyer, and other marks of attention which you have been pleased to show me, embolden me to believe that you think well of my integrity and abilities. On the other hand, I declare that I should pay the utmost deference to your instructions as my constituents; and as I am now the representative of a family which has held an estate in the county, and maintained a respectable character for almost three centuries, I flatter myself that I shall not be reckoned too presumptuous when I aspire to the high distinction of being your representative in Parliament, and that you will not disapprove of my indulging an ambition that this family shall rather advance than fall off in my time.

"Though I should not be successful at the next, or at any future election, I am so fortunate as to have resources enough to prevent me from being discontented or fretful on that account; and I shall ever be, with cordial regard, Gentlemen, your very faithful, and most obedient, humble servant, JAMES BOSWELL.

"Auchinleck, March 17, 1784."

But on reaching Auchinleck he found the Colonel,

who he hoped would have retired, was seeking re-election. Finding that he had no chance, he set off for London.

On his way to town he was received with hospitality at Carlisle, by Dr. Percy, then Bishop of Dromore, a kindness which he was to return by strange lack of courtesy in his great work. When he reached Edinburgh he wrote to him, on March 6th, and, after thanking the bishop for his "very kind hospitality at Carlisle," he enters on what his mind was then full of, the political state and prospects of the country. "The state of the nation has for some time been such that in my opinion every good subject is called upon to defend the constitution by supporting the crown. I enclose a pamphlet which I have published on the subject, and which I am truly happy to find has had considerable influence. I rejoice that the Irish appear to be so loyal. If your lordship thinks that my pamphlet will promote the laudable spirit, and any of the Dublin publishers choose to run the risk of reprinting it, I shall be glad to hear of its success."

He then passes to the subject of Dr. Johnson, whom he intended to wait on "at the end of the month with respectful attention. I wish to publish as a regale to him, a neat little volume, 'The Praises of Dr. Johnson by contemporary writers.' It will be about the size of Selden's 'Table Talk,' of which your lordship made me a present, with an inscription on the blank leaf in print which does me honour. It is placed in the library at Auchinleck. Will your lordship take the trouble to send me a note of the writers you recollect who have praised our much respected friend. My address when in London is at General Paoli's, in Portman Square." The bishop, however, took no notice of this letter, and,

four months later, Boswell wrote to know had he received it.

"I am now, as your lordship once observed to me, your neighbour. For while here, at the romantic seat of my ancestors, I am at no great distance from Ireland. I hope we shall visit as neighbours." In another letter he dwells on the same prospect: "What a dreary thing (I cannot help feeling it) is it to have one's friends removed to a distant country. When I recollect the many pleasing hours which I have spent with Dr. Percy in London, and the few at Alnwick, and the few at Edinburgh, and a good many at Carlisle, how much do I wish we were well established in England. I am resolved, however, some time or other, to see Ireland all over, and with what glee shall we talk old stories at Dromore." It would be hard to resist this affectionate warmth.

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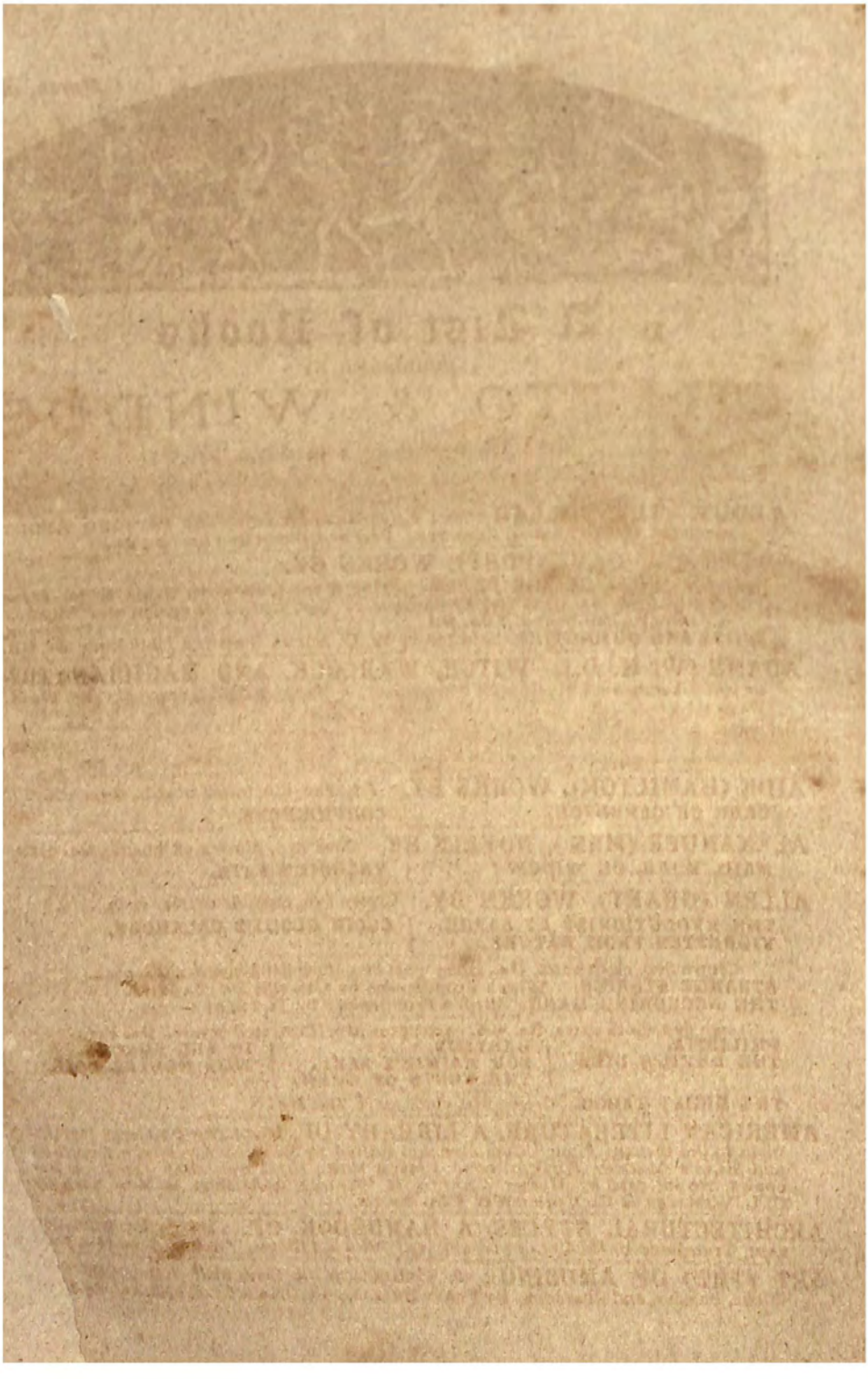

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